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JED PERL

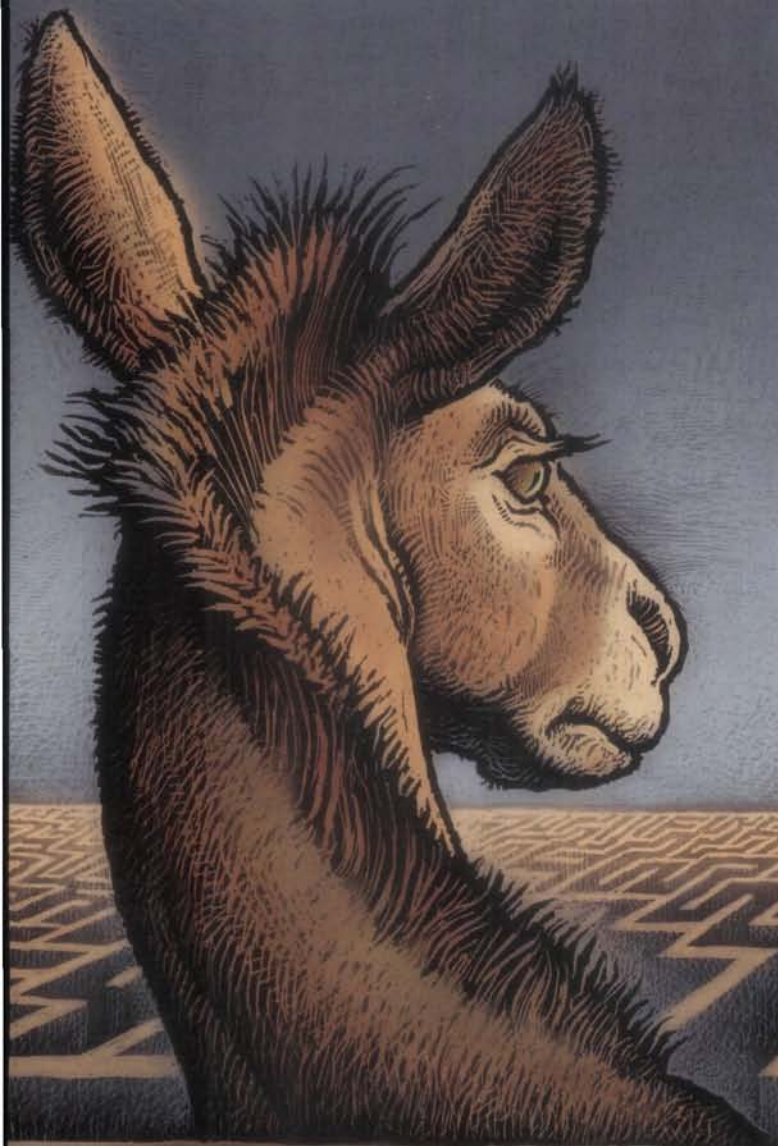
WHO BUSH SHOULD, AND
SHOULDN'T, PICK FOR THE COURT
JEFFREY ROSEN

WWW.TNR.COM ► NOVEMBER 29 & DECEMBER 6, 2004

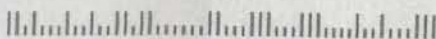
THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE ROAD BACK

HOW THE
DEMOCRATS
CAN RIDE THE
DEFICIT
TO POWER
CLAY RISEN



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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND THE ARTS

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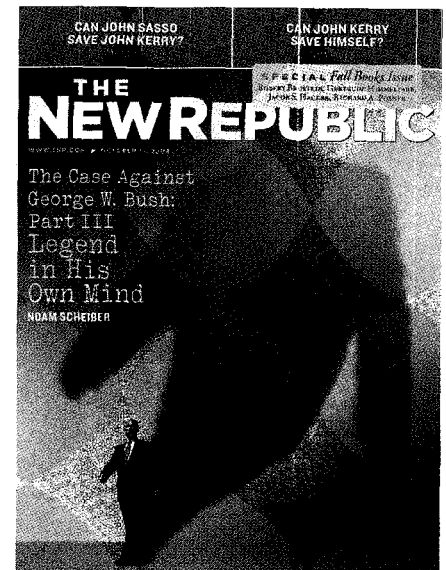
WAR GAMES

IN AN OTHERWISE SOBER TAKE ON THE unrealistic positions of both candidates on what to do in Iraq, Martin Peretz devalues his case when he agrees with President Bush's crutch that Iraq and the rest of the world are better off without Saddam Hussein in power ("Evil Lesser," October 11). Iraq and the world are not necessarily better off without Saddam. It is too soon to know whether what materializes in the wake of Saddam will be better for Iraqis and the rest of the world, and we *do* know that the current situation is no better. A mark of improvement will be when order is restored and a government emerges that does not require U.S. security for its survival. Saddam's removal does give Iraq the opportunity for improvement but also the potential for abysmal failure.

CHAD LALLEMAND
Tallahassee, Florida

IN THE GREATER COSMOLOGY OF DECEPTION, there are, of course, sins of commission and sins of omission. Peretz is no doubt correct that John Kerry's promise to seek multilateral military assistance to stabilize Iraq was nothing short of pure fantasy, and indeed, Kerry's favored approach in the broader war on terrorism—liberal internationalism—might have done little to undermine the root causes of Islamist terrorism against the West (the political, economic, and cultural status quo in the Arab and wider Muslim world and America's continued enabling of that status quo). Kerry's policy was therefore at best a policy of containment. And containment, in this case, means the likelihood of massive terrorist attacks on U.S. soil for years—if not decades—to come. As a political matter, at the very least, the American people could not accept this state of affairs.

But, while Kerry may not have come clean about his favored approach to the Iraq debacle—and the potential inade-



quacies of liberal internationalism in the so-called war on terrorism—the neoconservatives and their fellow traveler liberal hawks (including friends in the press like *THE NEW REPUBLIC*) have yet to come clean with the American people about the potential costs of democratizing and liberalizing the Arab world—in lives, dollars, civil liberties, and cultural freedoms. They have yet to come clean about the likelihood of a general draft and the possibility that many thousands of young men and women in Generation Y will die for the baby-boomers' crusade. They have yet to come clean with the already struggling, indebted Generation X, which will see its taxes rise to pay for the multitrillion-dollar cost of the wars (on top of the already \$50 trillion-plus shortfall for boomer entitlements). They have yet to come clean with all generations of Americans about the inevitability of further erosions of our civil liberties and freedoms of expression. And they have yet to come clean about the full costs of a U.S. empire.

KENNETH HEMPEL
Nevada City, California

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BOWLING ALONE

HASSAN FATTAH WRITES THAT Turkey's shift toward greater Islamism within its government is causing Israel to lose its only ally in the Middle East ("Turkey Club," October 11). While his conclusion, at first glance, seems quite compelling, it reflects a deeper conceptual problem. He finishes with an irony: "Israel has long complained about its isolation as the only true democracy in the Middle East. Who ever thought that the birth of a second real democracy in the region would leave it more isolated still?" Fattah is making an assumption that has proved wrong over and over again. He believes that Turkey can come closer and closer to being an Islamic state (and by definition, according to the present Islamic weltanschauung, decrease its dealings with Israel) while, at the same time, becoming the second real democracy in the Middle East. Recent history has shown that countries that gravitate toward Islam tend to become less democratic, not more. It may not be a coincidence that Islam's present view of Israel also betrays its feelings about many things that democratic states represent. Ultimately, I hope that Fattah is right and that Turkey does develop into the second true democratic country in the region. Perhaps then, all countries in the Middle East, including Israel, can feel a bit safer.

RABBI CHAIM EISENSTEIN
Netiv Aryeh Talmudical College
Jerusalem, Israel

THOMAS, MORE

I ENJOYED DAVID GARROW'S REVIEW of Ken Fosskett's book about Justice Clarence Thomas ("Saving Thomas," October 25). My impressions of Thomas were formed during the confirmation process, but not by the animosity and sniggering of the sexual harassment charges. I believed, at the time, that there was probably some fire under the smoke, but absent any confirming evidence, I did not feel any pressing need to object to him on those grounds. What bothered me then—and what I remembered when reading Garrow's review—was my certainty that an underqualified applicant was being advanced merely because of his color. The irony of a Republican president doing it was not lost on the press at the time, but it did seem overshadowed by the allegations of impropriety that were spun to cast Thomas as the victim of a malicious smear cam-

paign, thus deflecting the spotlight from his lack of experience. The possibility that he may now be rounding into a competent justice notwithstanding, Thomas's career illustrates both the best intentions of affirmative action (rewarding effort if not always achievement) as well as the inherent dangers (corruption of the process for self-gain, in this case Bush's reelection, and the inefficiency resulting from that). It is always laudable and good for society to reward effort, even apart from achievement, but not at the highest level of any profession. Ultimately, achievement must outweigh effort, if only because it is easier to measure and therefore less susceptible to self-interested bias.

PETER R. TISCHER
Port Jefferson, New York

GOTTA HAVE FAITH

AMY SULLIVAN MUST NOT HAVE talked to Luis León, the rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C.'s Lafayette Square ("Empty Pew," October 11). Contrary to her assertion that Bush rarely attends church, the president and Mrs. Bush

have been regular attendees and financial supporters of St. John's. While it is true that they have not submitted a formal letter of transfer from their home parish, they have attended services on an average of twice a month in the months before the election. They appear to attend whenever they are in Washington on Sunday.

JAMES ROWLAND LOWE JR.
Washington, D.C.

AMY SULLIVAN RESPONDS:

It is not surprising that Bush attended church in the months before the presidential election. In the article, I acknowledged that the Bushes occasionally attend St. John's, writing that, when the president does go to church, "he drops in on the little Episcopal church across Lafayette Park from the White House." I would argue, however, that it is a stretch to characterize the first family as "regular attendees and financial supporters of St. John's." Even White House staffers admit that Bush is not a regular churchgoer in Washington, which is why they go to such pains to provide excuses for why that is. ■

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Morally Correct

ONCE UPON A TIME, CONSERVATIVES considered “sensitivity” a dirty word. In the 1980s and 1990s, when African Americans and other campus minorities claimed they were victims of racism and demanded greater respect from white students and faculty, conservatives popularized a term for this group whining: political correctness. They gasped when campus radicals tried to silence criticism of affirmative action by saying it created a hostile climate for black students. They worried aloud that university administrators—in their efforts to spare minority students’ feelings—were stifling debate. For a time, combating this culture of punitive sensitivity was one of the right’s primary concerns.

Not anymore. In the wake of their recent triumph at the polls, conservatives have found their own supposedly disrespected minority: evangelicals. And they are playing victim politics with a gusto that would make campus radicals proud.

One of the things that galled the right during the “political correctness” wars was the way leftists casually threw around terms like “racist” and “bigot.” For conservatives, some of whom knew firsthand how much harm those accusations could cause, it became axiomatic that such pejoratives should be reserved for only the most egregious, clear-cut examples of racial or ethnic animus. After Trent Lott—a man who had long consorted with white supremacists—praised Strom Thurmond’s segregationist 1948 presidential bid, many conservatives called him dumb and embarrassing. (To their credit, some called for his removal as Senate leader.) But very few were willing to call him a bigot. Few would pin the label even on Jesse Helms or Thurmond himself. Extreme scrupulousness about such epithets seemed like a touchstone of the conservative worldview.

That’s how it seemed, anyhow. In recent weeks, prominent conservatives have been anything but scrupulous in charging Democrats with bigotry against people of faith. Just before the election, Christian Right leader James Dobson called Democratic Senator Patrick Leahy a “God’s people hater.” On November 8, talk-show host Joe Scarborough condemned “Democrats who take solace in their bigoted anti-Christian screeds.” Right-wing pundit



Michelle Malkin recently blurbed a book titled *Persecution: How Liberals are Waging War Against Christianity*, noting that “*Persecution* exposes the hypocrisy and bigotry of the secular, anti-Christian Left.” And, last Sunday, Mary Matalin chimed in on “Meet the Press,” claiming that “people of faith, in the election process, they have been demonized and they have been treated with disdain and contempt.” Imagine if James Carville, who was seated next to her on the show, had made the same claim about African Americans (who, although they are one of the most religious groups in America, vote Democratic, and thus don’t fall under Matalin’s “people of faith” rubric). Within 15 minutes, the conservative blogosphere would have accused him of politically correct demagoguery.

To be fair, occasionally liberals do treat evangelical Christians with condescension and scorn. Conservatives frequently, and justifiably, expressed outrage at a *Washington Post* news story that called followers of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson “largely poor, uneducated and easy to command.” (They tend not to note that the story is eleven years old, and the *Post* issued an immediate retraction.) On November 4, in *The New York Times*, Garry Wills suggested that America now resembles the theocracies of the Muslim world more than it resembles Western Europe, which is offensive, not to mention absurd.

But, most of the time, what conservatives call anti-evangelical bigotry is simply harsh criticism of the Christian Right’s agenda. Scarborough seized on a recent column by Maureen Dowd, which accused President Bush of “replacing science with religion, and facts with faith,” leading America into “another dark age.” *The Weekly Standard* recently pilloried Thomas Friedman for criticizing “Christian fundamentalists” who “promote divisions and intolerance at home and abroad,” and Howell Raines, for saying the Christian Right wants to enact “theo-

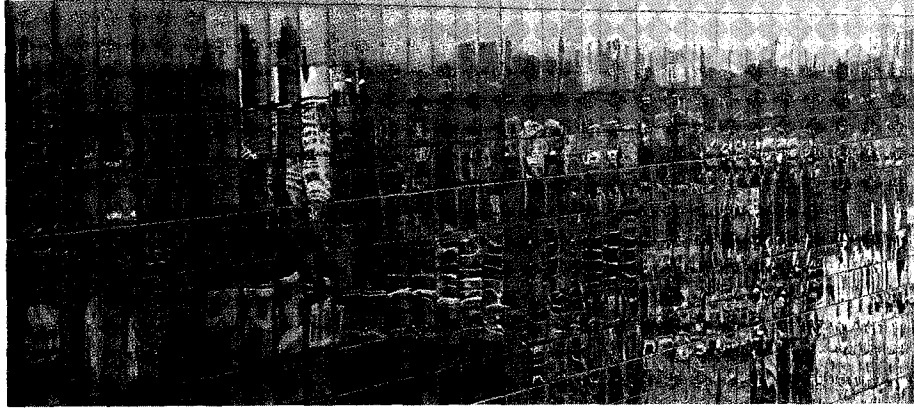
logically based cultural norms.”

This isn’t bigotry. What these (and most other) liberals are saying is that the Christian Right sees politics through the prism of theology, and there’s something dangerous in that. And they’re right. It’s fine if religion influences your moral values. But, when you make public arguments, you have to ground them—as much as possible—in reason and evidence, things that are accessible to people of different religions, or no religion at all. Otherwise, you can’t persuade other people, and they can’t persuade you. In a diverse democracy, there must be a common political language, and that language can’t be theological.

Sometimes, conservative evangelicals grasp this and find nonreligious justifications for their views. (Christian conservatives sometimes argue that embryonic stem cells hold little scientific promise, or that gay marriage leads to fewer straight ones. On abortion, they sometimes cite medical advances to show that fetuses are more like infants than pro-choicers recognize. Such arguments are accessible to all, and thus permit fruitful debate.) But, since the election, the airwaves have been full of a different kind of argument. What many conservatives are now saying is that, since certain views are part of evangelicals’ identity, harshly criticizing those views represents discrimination. It’s no different than when some feminists say that, since the right to abortion is a critical part of their identity, opposing abortion disrespects them as women. When George Stephanopoulos asked Dobson to justify his charge that Senator Leahy is an anti-Christian bigot, he replied that the Vermont senator “has been in opposition to most of the things that I believe.” In other words, disagree with me and you’re a racist. Al Sharpton couldn’t have said it better.

Identity politics is a powerful thing—a way of short-circuiting debate by claiming that your views aren’t merely views; they are an integral part of who you are. And who you are must be respected. But harsh criticism is not disrespect—and to claim it is undermines democratic debate by denying opponents the right to aggressively, even impolitely, disagree. That is what conservatives are doing when they accuse liberals of religious bigotry merely for demanding that the Christian Right defend their viewpoints with facts, not faith. Once upon a time, conservatives knew better. I hope some still do.

PETER BEINART



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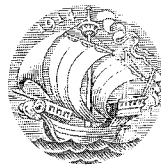
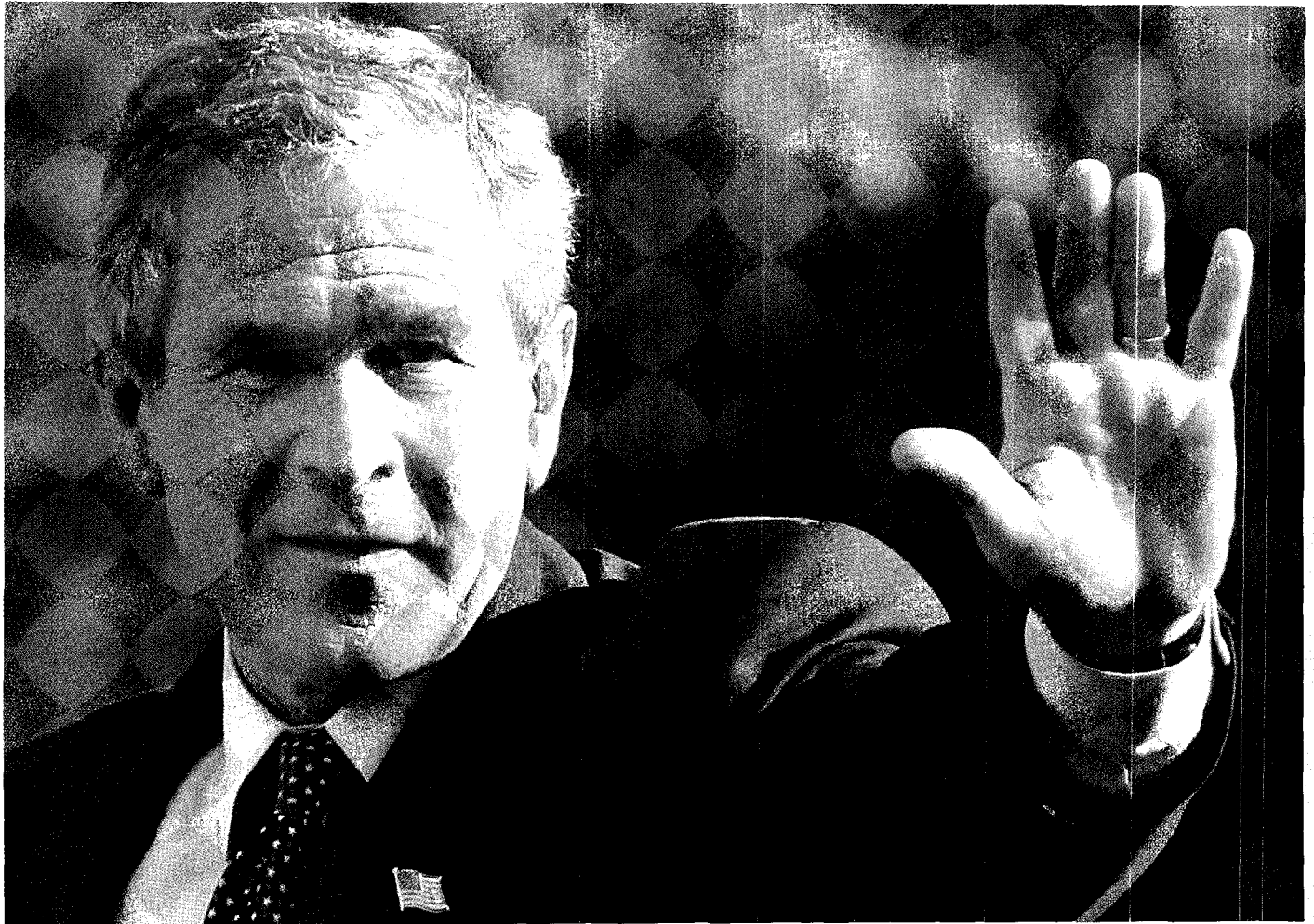
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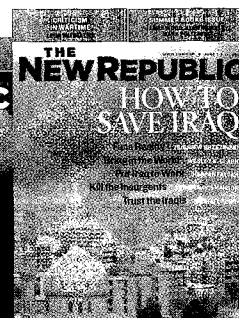
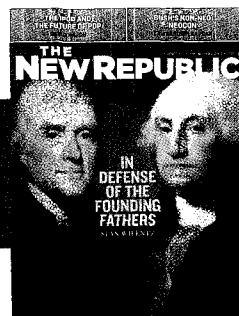
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End of Discussion

CONDOLEEZZA RICE, the woman nominated to fill Colin Powell's chair at the Department of State, possesses an important diplomatic virtue: She can be completely inscrutable, refusing to reveal her inner thoughts to the press or to the world. But, on one matter, Condi is clear. She is absolutely loyal to the president, so deferential that, as *New York* magazine reported, at a Washington dinner party earlier this year, Rice casually and accidentally referred to her employer, George W. Bush, as her "husband." Of course, there's a long history of presidents

installing political confidants in Foggy Bottom. But Rice's appointment is an important omen of the coming term. It portends an administration that has interpreted its electoral victory as evidence that its policies are, objectively, successful and believes that the biggest problem of the first term was an excessive openness to competing views.

Let's begin with the obvious. The last four years can hardly be described as a resounding foreign policy triumph. While Iraq still offers remote hopes of democratic self-rule, the nation seems well on its way to becoming a gangster's paradise engulfed by civil war. The Bush administration presided over the Abu Ghraib scandal and then tried to cover up the culpability of top officials. Meanwhile, it has turned a blind eye to proliferation in North Korea and Iran, sins of omission that make the dreaded nexus of terrorists and weapons of mass destruction more dangerous than before. It has also alienated much of Europe, as well as allies across the globe.

Faced with these failures, you would think that this transitional moment might offer a convenient opportunity to retire the architects of these debacles—or that a chief executive might want to infuse some new blood into the ranks of his deputies.

But the Bush administration has always had a peculiar human resources policy. It doesn't punish incompetence. Instead, it rewards it with extensions of tenure and promotions, so long as the incompetents prove their absolute loyalty.

There's perfect internal logic, therefore, in Rice's replacement of Powell. Where Rice completely backed the administration's Iraq policy, Powell wasn't such a team player. To be sure, he didn't always challenge his ideological foes with persistence or genuine courage. But he at least had the intellectual honesty to occasionally raise important objections about policies toward Iraq and North Korea—objections made vigorously enough to ruin his relationships with Dick Cheney and the Pentagon. These objections may have led to Powell, as some have suggested, leaving State several months earlier than he had planned. Indeed, his departure fits the pattern set by Paul O'Neill and Lawrence Lindsey. In the Bush administration, there is really only one crime worthy of internal exile or firing: dissent.

It gets worse. Rice has been sent

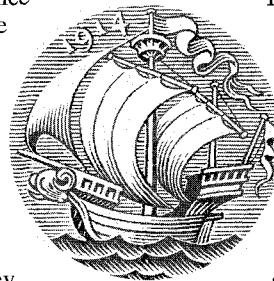
to State with a mission. According to press reports, she wants to overhaul her new organization. On its own, this might be a reasonable goal: Foggy Bottom's bureaucracy can be sclerotic. But, given this administration's history, it is hard not to regard her talk of transformation as a pretext for purging critics. After all, a leitmotif of this administration has been its scandalous treatment of the bureaucrats who have historically supplied policymakers with objective analysis—a disregard for empiricism that has extended to the suppression of findings produced by Environmental Protection Agency scientists and Treasury Department economists.

Now, it appears that the White House wants to take its war against bureaucrats to the institutions of foreign policy. It's not just the desire to sap power from the civil servants at State. There are signs—especially the recent firing of high-ranking officials and the departure of several others—that the administration wants to impose new restraints on the CIA, rendering its critics there impotent.

Much of the press still fails to wrap its mind around this agenda.

Even after the Iraq war, journalists imagine that circumstances will force the Bush administration to trim its sails and follow a more modest international course. But there is a lesson to be learned from the first term: This president should be taken at his word.

The radical foreign policy he outlines isn't merely rhetorical. He really does believe that his electoral victory proves he has made no mistakes. And, if history didn't provide enough clues about his instincts, Rice's ascendance should leave no doubt about where this administration is headed—full steam in the same perilous direction. ■



NOTEBOOK

HARRY REID'S YUCCA STANCE... ARLEN SPECTER'S HAIR-SHIRT DANCE

REID'S MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

ONE (VERY SMALL) UPSIDE TO JOHN Kerry's defeat was its beneficial implications for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. Hoping to win over voters in Nevada who detest the idea of the planned radioactive dump 100 miles from Las Vegas (see Michael Crowley, "Nuclear Option," November 1), Kerry had vowed to block the project. Kerry's pandering was politically smart but substantively indefensible, as Yucca is the best solution we now have for America's nuclear waste crisis. (If we don't store waste at Yucca, it will pile up in unsafe conditions at nuclear power plants near heavily populated areas.)

But, as things played out, the election was a disaster for Yucca anyway. Tom Daschle's defeat has led Nevada's Harry Reid to replace him as Senate minority leader. Reid has made clear he will use every tool in his powerful new arsenal to derail the project before waste begins to arrive there, sometime around 2010. Already, Reid has been blocking minor Bush nominees to gain leverage for his effort to confirm his top science adviser as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which must still conduct a formal study and green-light Yucca before any waste can be stored there. Reid has also been holding up an energy and water spending bill as he tries to gut its funding for Yucca activities.

We wish Reid the best in his upcoming battles against President Bush's second-term agenda. But, now that he's a Senate leader, it would be nice if he could stop placing his parochial obsession ahead of the national interest.

PROTECTION RACKET

TOM DELAY, ALREADY TWICE-censured by the House Ethics Committee, is facing possible indictment in Texas on charges of illegal fund-raising. According to rules embraced by both parties, in the event of an indictment, DeLay would have to relinquish his post as



Senator Harry Reid

majority leader. Until last week, that is. On Wednesday, House Republicans amended those rules to allow indicted leaders to retain their posts unless a party committee orders them to step down. The supposed logic behind the change is that grand juries, especially state grand juries, are often tools of partisan prosecutors. "This takes the power away from any partisan crackpot district attorney who may want to indict" party leaders, said Representative Henry Bonilla, the Texas Republican who proposed the change (he originally pushed for a blanket exemption from all state grand jury indictments). Right. Makes sense. Never mind that Bonilla owes DeLay his political life. In 2002, Bonilla won with a scant 52 percent; but, thanks to DeLay's aggressive—and potentially illegal—efforts to reshape the state's House districts, Bonilla's seat this time around was secure; he won in a 69 percent landslide. At least some GOP members are more honest about what has taken place. As

GOP Chief Deputy Whip Eric Cantor told *The Washington Post* Tuesday, "That's why this [proposed rule change] is going to pass. ... [T]here is a tremendous recognition that Tom DeLay led on the issue to produce five more seats" through his redistricting drive. Apparently, ethics are for little people.

ARLEN AGONISTES

WE DON'T LOVE ARLEN SPECTER—it's nothing personal; no one does—but we're only human. The groveling we've witnessed from the senator as he tries to rescue his chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee has been so prolonged and painful that some of us at *THE NEW REPUBLIC* have even begun gathering up sticks and beating ourselves.

It started, of course, when Specter, after weathering a tough Republican primary in Pennsylvania, won a fifth term in the Senate and held an incautious press conference. Specter noted that, "when you talk about judges who would change the right of a woman to choose, overturn *Roe v. Wade*, I think that is unlikely." To make matters worse for himself, he observed that "the president is well aware of what happened when a number of his nominees were sent up with the filibuster." Then there was Bush's reelection: "If you have a race that is won by a percent or two, you have a narrowly divided country, and that's not a traditional mandate."

Suddenly, Specter's chairmanship was in jeopardy. The begging that followed was not pretty. "Contrary to press accounts, I did not warn the president about anything," Specter insisted shortly afterward. "I have supported all of President Bush's nominees in committee and on the floor," he told "Face the Nation" that weekend. The following week, Specter wrote in *The Wall Street Journal*: "To resolve any concern that I would block pro-life judicial nominees, take a look at my record. I ... vot[ed] to con-

firm pro-life nominees including Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justice Antonin Scalia, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor and Justice Anthony Kennedy. I led the fight to confirm Justice Clarence Thomas. ... I have voted for all of President Bush's judicial nominees in committee and on the floor." But a week and a half of this wasn't enough for some. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist reminded Fox News that Specter's comments had been "disheartening" to him and indicated that Specter had "not yet" redeemed himself.

Now that Specter has completed over 30 repentant TV interviews and, one assumes, many more closed-door flagella-

tion sessions, the worst may be over. Since this has been dreadful to watch, however, let us weigh in, just to be safe: Republicans, please stop tormenting Arlen Specter. We promise, like Specter, to do as you say. While we may have criticized the president at times, we've never meant it, and, having thought it over, we may even favor putting his likeness on most coins. Take a look at our record: We've published many authors with whom we disagree—in fact, we probably hate most of our writers yet tolerate them anyway. So it boils down to this: Either shoot Arlen Specter or give him his rubber stamp. Either one is probably fine. Just make it stop.

UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE YEAR, AND NEXT YEAR, AND THE YEAR AFTER THAT...

MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THE president broadly believes his direction is correct." —Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

IN STANLEY KAUFFMANN'S REVIEW of *I ♥ Huckabees* ("Insight and Oversight," October 25), the character played by Jason Schwartzman should have been identified as an environmentalist, not an employee of Huckabees. We regret the error. ■

TNR.commentary



MARTIAL LAW ANXIETY: With the absence of civil authority comes widespread speculation in the Iraqi press—courtesy of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting—that last week's declaration of martial law is no temporary measure. The daily *Al Mashriq* asked last Tuesday, "[W]hat happens after the 60-day period for the law expires? Is this law the first step in the treatment or the last one?" Another daily, *Addustour*, wrote on November 11, "[T]aking into consideration what is going on in Falluja and other cities, we have a clear idea of the government's aims. It wants to achieve them regardless of the consequences of the methods used. ... [T]he military solution may win the battle on the ground but it will leave injuries that cannot be cured by politics."

Just because Iyad Allawi doesn't actually control Iraq doesn't mean he won't extend his declared state of emergency. Rather, Allawi's general impotence could very well compel him to stiffen his control over the territory that does answer to him as a way of insisting that he's still the boss. (This is what the Shah did during the final months of his reign.) A bizarre defense of the

state of emergency appeared in the November 12 edition of *Baghdad*, the newspaper of Allawi's Iraqi National Accord (INA):

Being temporary, it does not aim to suspend democratic life. The Iraqi National Accord believes that there is no alternative to democracy in Iraq. Besides, the said emergency law was issued by agreement with all the political parties in the government, not by any one individual or party.

So, essentially, the INA is arguing that martial law isn't a power grab—but, if it is, remember that it isn't just Allawi who is grabbing power. Given the escalation of the insurgency even in the wake of the Falluja invasion, expect to see more of these arguments in the weeks ahead.

&C.

NOAM SCHEIBER

WERE CULTURAL ISSUES THE REASON KERRY LOST?: Ed Kilgore and Ruy Teixeira both puzzle over the latest Democracy Corps memo, which argues that John Kerry was in a position to win the election ten days out before abruptly losing ground among swing voters over cultural issues. Teixeira seizes on an important omission from the otherwise useful memo, which is "an

explanation for *why* this cultural surge at the end of the campaign took place and what, if anything, Democrats could have done to forestall it." Kilgore responds, quite reasonably, that "you have to meet the cultural issues head-on instead of perpetually and insultingly trying to change the subject." He adds that "Democrats can no longer rationalize away cultural issues as a big part of the systemic political problem we now face. Unless we prove otherwise, no matter who runs Washington, we are part of the 'wrong track' when it comes to cultural concerns."

There's a lot to this. But what everyone is overlooking is the degree to which cultural issues and national security credibility are connected. In my mind, the most important question swing voters asked themselves on Election Day was, "Which guy is going to keep me safe?" But, in answering this question, they didn't think through the details of how Iraq was going, or how much loose nuclear material the administration had secured, or even how many members of Al Qaeda we've rolled up in the last three years. What they thought was, "Which candidate do I trust more: my plain-talking, brush-clearing, evil-denouncing commander-in-chief, or this windsurfing, paté-eating, well-coiffed guy from Massachusetts?" Obviously, the answer to that question wasn't very close.

The Democracy Corps memo says, "While Kerry crossed the threshold on security, he was weighed down by doubts about his convictions and authenticity and cultural baggage that left him short with rural, many blue collar, non-college educated and union voters, and Hispanics." This is nearly nonsensical. In an election that's fundamentally about national security, there's no way to clear the threshold on security while failing to clear it on cultural issues. Taking a hit on cultural issues means taking a hit on national security.

The effect works in the other direction, too. If people don't feel like they can entirely trust you to defend them, it's not a huge leap for them to question whether you can defend their values—say, defend their kids from Hollywood smut, or defend their guns from federal bureaucrats. That Kerry would suffer an erosion on values issues in the homestretch isn't surprising since, contrary to the Democracy Corps memo, I don't think he ever did cross the national security threshold. It is this connection between cultural issues and national security, not cultural issues per se, that explains why swing voters didn't break toward Kerry in the final stretch of the campaign.

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Nablus Dispatch Family Feud

BY DAN EPHRON

YOU WOULD THINK, from the way Abu Mujahed talks about the new Palestinian leadership, that he belongs to one of the radical Islamic opposition groups like Hamas. The 26-year-old fighter from the Balata refugee camp in the West Bank, near Nablus, believes that Mahmoud Abbas, Yasir Arafat's provisional successor, will try to crush the four-year-old Palestinian uprising if elected president in a vote this January. He says an Abbas-led government would cave to U.S. pressure and sell out Palestine in peace talks. And he vows to turn his gun, a nine-millimeter Beretta he keeps wedged in his pants, on any Palestinian leader who accepts compromises that Arafat rebuffed. "We don't trust this man," he said of Abbas in a smoky room in the camp this week, sipping coffee with another fighter.

But Abu Mujahed, who withheld his real name because he is on Israel's long list of Palestinian fugitives accused of fomenting terrorism, is actually a member of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, a militia aligned with the Fatah faction that Arafat and Abbas themselves established nearly 40 years ago. He joined Al Aqsa in 2001, and, since then, the militia has splintered and formed numerous internal rivalries. Some of its members have become involved in local crime rings or accepted money from outside sources like Iran. In the Nablus area alone, which includes Balata and several other refugee camps, at least five separate groups claim the title of Al Aqsa Martyrs. "It was this little group that was supposed to fight against Israeli occupation, but it's become a Frankenstein for them," says a reserve Israeli general who served, until recently, in the West Bank and Gaza.

Now it is Abbas's Frankenstein. Analysts have largely focused on the problems the new Palestinian leadership will face from Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, the two main Islamic opposition groups in the West Bank and Gaza. Both reject any conciliation with Israel and have been reluctant to be dragged into cease-fires. But, in the short time since Arafat's death, it is actually Al Aqsa that has emerged as possibly the most vexing obstacle to an orderly transition of power. It was primarily Al Aqsa fighters who turned Arafat's West Bank burial into a spectacle of chaos and aggression. Two days later, militants from the group barged into a tent in Gaza where Abbas was attending a wake for Arafat and killed two bodyguards in a ten-minute shootout.

During the exchange, they shouted "No to Abu Mazen," Abbas's pseudonym, and "No to [Mohammed] Dahlan," a former Gaza security chief who accompanied him.

TO SURVIVE POLITICALLY—and maybe physically—Abbas needs to tame Al Aqsa. But, as a long-time deputy to Arafat who shunned the spotlight and steered clear of militancy, he lacks both Arafat's stature and his military credentials. In fact, most polls put Abbas's public support in the West Bank and Gaza at just 2 or 3 percent, below Dahlan and other street leaders like the jailed Marwan Barghouti. For Abbas, bringing Al Aqsa to heel could be the key to winning the election in January and certainly a precondition for advancing a pragmatic political agenda, which might include battling Islamic radicals and moving closer to peace deals with Israel. "If he wants to take on Hamas at some point, he has to first put his own forces in order," says Shalom Harari, a former adviser on Palestinian affairs to Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak. "You can't fight an enemy in front of you if you face a bayonet behind you."

Abu Mujahed's bayonet has been pointed at Israelis since before his twelfth birthday. A third-generation refugee whose grandparents grew up in a village near modern-day Tel Aviv, Abu Mujahed has spent nine of his 26 years in Israeli security prisons. On the first day of the first Palestinian uprising in 1987, his sister was shot dead during clashes with Israeli troops. Nine years later, soldiers shot him twice in the side during a protest at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus, a religious site Israel continued to hold even after handing control over the rest of the city to Palestinians. "They entered here and came out of my chest," he says, holding up his shirt to show the scars. But Abu Mujahed concedes that the current Palestinian uprising has been drifting, unable to gain traction. In Nablus, more than any other West Bank town, militants have turned their guns inward, in some cases using them to settle old scores and bully the local population. "We can't even talk about something close to party discipline in the group," says Avi Issacharoff, an Israeli journalist who co-authored a recent book on the intifada.

Issacharoff relates a telling story about Al Aqsa in the Nablus area. During a trip to the town before Arafat died, Issacharoff met with a member of the group who also gave his name as Abu Mujahed (mujahed means "fighter" in Arabic and is a common nom de guerre). Abu Mujahed identified himself to Issacharoff as the head of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade in Nablus and outlined under what conditions he would be willing to lay down his arms (an Israeli troop withdrawal and a dismantling of settlements). Later that day, Issacharoff met with another member of Al Aqsa in Nablus who also described himself as the group's regional commander and also gave his name as Abu Mujahed. But his cease-fire conditions were different. He said Al Aqsa would go on fighting even if Israel withdrew from the area. "This is Al Aqsa," says Issacharoff, who, for his book, met with most jailed leaders of the group. "It's a huge supermar-

Dan Ephron covers the Middle East for NEWSWEEK.

ket of ideas and approaches.”

Even in Balata, home to just 22,000 Palestinians, the group has failed to remain cohesive. A few blocks over in the camp, I met Abu Ibrahim, an older Al Aqsa fighter who narrowly escaped assassination by Israel in August 2002. Abu Ibrahim (also a pseudonym) said he knew the Abu Mujahed I had interviewed earlier in the day but didn't consider him part of his Al Aqsa. Their tactics and style are different, he said, without elaborating. But he agreed with the younger fighters on one thing: the danger posed by Abbas. “My fear is that we will have our own Allawi here,” he said, referring to Iyad Allawi, Iraq's U.S.-appointed interim prime minister—“A person who just wants to please the Americans.”

Some of the resentment has to do with money. Abu Mujahed said he had been getting \$200 a month from Arafat, along with the salary he still draws from the Palestinian Authority from the pre-intifada days when he worked as a policeman. At least 100 other fighters in Balata alone and a few thousand throughout the West Bank received the same monthly payment. The salaries would be delivered by one of Arafat's aides to an Al Aqsa chief in Balata, who would hand them out in cash. But, when Arafat became ill last month, word came down from Ramallah that the payments would be halted for the time being. Now that he's dead, the Al Aqsa fighters worry that no one else has access to Arafat's secret accounts. “This isn't money that came through official channels,” Abu Mujahed told me. “We believe our financial resources will be cut.”

The concern seems warranted. Abbas appears to have neither Arafat's access to unsanctioned funds nor his inclination to use money to buy loyalty. If withholding funds would force the fighters to accept party discipline or to return to their regular units in the Palestinian security branches, Abbas might benefit. But authorities and analysts believe Al Aqsa can always go elsewhere for cash. Israeli intelligence officials have long suspected the Lebanese Hezbollah group is financing some Al Aqsa cells, possibly with money from Iran. And individual power brokers in Fatah have also opened their pockets to the group to advance their own political interests. As long as Arafat was doling out the funds, he retained some control over Al Aqsa. Abbas will have to find other leverage points.

ONE SUCH LEVERAGE point might be Barghouti, the 44-year-old Fatah leader who helped found Al Aqsa at the start of the current intifada. Barghouti has broad popularity in the West Bank and Gaza and, as a former uprising leader, enjoys credibility among street fighters like Abu Mujahed. “He could be very valuable to Abu Mazen if he was ready to line up behind him,” says Khalil Shikaki, the leading pollster and political analyst in the West Bank. Barghouti probably would, if he were a free man. But Barghouti is serving five consecutive life terms in Israel's Beersheba prison for engineering intifada attacks against Israelis. And, while he

helped bridge the gap between Abbas and the various militant factions when the latter served briefly as prime minister last year, the political incentives have changed. “The situation is different now,” Barghouti's lawyer, Jawad Boulous, told me in a phone conversation a few days ago. “Marwan is weighing several options. He hasn't made any decisions.”

One possibility is for Barghouti himself to run for president, competing against Abbas. Though he couldn't serve from prison, a victory would probably heighten international pressure on Israel to free Barghouti. A less likely scenario is that Israel would release him before the vote with the understanding that Barghouti would help Abbas's election campaign. At least one member of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Cabinet last week suggested considering clemency for Barghouti. “We have to have a peace process where we weigh freeing prisoners, and maybe we'll also consider freeing him,” Interior Minister Avraham Poraz said. But Sharon opposes the idea, and even U.S. pressure is unlikely to sway him. For Abbas, that could mean having to face the wrath of Abu Mujaheds everywhere. Or the bullet of just one. ■

Pakistan's shady new ambassador. Friend Like This

BY DAVID ARMSTRONG

SINCE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, President Bush has consistently touted his administration's determination to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction to terrorists and regimes that sponsor them. As evidence of progress, in his first debate with John Kerry, the president proclaimed that the nuclear smuggling ring headed by Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan had been “brought to justice.” In truth, nothing of the kind has taken place. More than ten months after the public exposure of Khan's proliferation network, no one involved has been prosecuted. Khan himself received a full pardon from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. The Bush administration responded not by imposing sanctions on Pakistan, but by praising Musharraf's government for its “serious efforts to end the activities of a dangerous network.”

But Pakistan is hardly serious. It turns out that Pakistan's new envoy to Washington may have sanctioned Khan's dealings. Islamabad recently announced the appointment of a former Pakistani military chief, General Jehangir Karamat, as its ambassador-designate to the United States. Karamat,

David Armstrong is a reporter with the National Security News Service.

who is a close friend of Musharraf, served as head of Pakistan's armed forces from 1996 to 1998. Last February, following exposure of his black-market network, Khan told Pakistani investigators that he traded in nuclear technology with the full knowledge of top military officials—including Karamat.

KHAN MADE THE allegations in an eleven-page signed statement in which he confessed to selling atomic secrets beginning in 1988. A senior Pakistani military official told reporters in early February that Khan named Karamat and retired General Mirza Aslam Beg, who headed Pakistan's army from 1988 to 1991, as authorizing the sales. According to the official, Khan's statement accused Karamat and Beg of "indirectly instructing" him to make the transfers. Indeed, the official said Khan told investigators he acted on instructions that Karamat and Beg had passed through two middlemen—a military adviser to former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto and a friend of Bhutto's. Moreover, a friend of Khan's told reporters in February that the scientist had recently informed him that Karamat, Beg, and Musharraf, who succeeded Karamat as army chief, were "aware of everything" he had done. (In response to questions from THE NEW REPUBLIC, Karamat flatly denied Khan's assertions.)

In debriefings by investigators, Khan reportedly stated that Karamat was immersed in the details of an arrangement in which Pakistan received help with its ballistic missile program in exchange for providing North Korea with uranium-enrichment technology. This makes sense: During his tenure as army chief of staff, Karamat held overall responsibility for Pakistan's Ghauri mid-range missile program. And, in December 1997, Karamat reportedly made a secret trip to North Korea. Four months later, in April 1998, he officiated at the first successful test of the Ghauri, widely believed to be a rechristened North Korean Nodong missile. "What Khan is implying is that there was a quid pro quo and that Karamat was aware of what was going on," says Gaurav Kampani, a senior research associate at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California. "[Khan] is suggesting that [Karamat] presided over the nuclear-for-missile transfer or actually signed off on it." (Karamat insisted to TNR that he did not travel to North Korea and was not aware of or involved in an exchange of missiles for nuclear technology.)

Those who know Karamat describe him as a level-headed individual. Stephen Cohen, director of the India-South Asia Project at the Brookings Institution, where Karamat was a visiting fellow in 2000, says Karamat is one of the most "sensible" and "reflective" officers the Pakistani military has produced. Yet Cohen and other close observers of Pakistani affairs agree there may be substance to Khan's assertions. "There is no way Khan could have done what he did without at least the acquiescence of the Pakistani military establishment [of which Karamat was a part]," says Ashley Tellis, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endow-

ment for International Peace, who studies South Asia. As for Karamat's possible knowledge of Khan's activities, Cohen says that, although he never took the matter up with the former general, "I would assume that, as army chief of staff, he would have known a lot."

The Khan scandal caught the United States in an extremely awkward position. Having embraced Pakistan as an essential ally in the war on terrorism, the Bush administration is loath to risk a rupture over the issue of proliferation. As a result, says Tellis, "The U.S. has essentially acquiesced to the Pakistani government's position on this matter." The upshot is that, even as the administration proclaims its commitment to halting the spread of weapons of mass destruction, it finds itself unable to meaningfully address the most dangerous proliferation crisis in history.

Karamat is a case in point. Washington's response to his nomination as ambassador has been muted. The Bush administration accepted his appointment shortly after it was announced. The general is expected to present his credentials to Bush and take up his new post soon. The State Department declined to comment on Khan's allegations concerning Karamat.

UNTIL THERE IS a full investigation of the Khan affair, it will be impossible to know which, if any, of the scientist's nuclear deals were approved by Pakistani officials, or even whether the nuclear network has been completely shut down. A truly independent investigation would require free and unfettered access to Khan and his cohorts, something Musharraf has so far refused to allow. In fact, on the very day Bush declared that Khan had been "brought to justice," the International Atomic Energy Agency announced that it had been barred from interviewing the master proliferator.

Despite this, the Bush administration has accepted Pakistan's assertions that no political or military leaders, including Karamat or Musharraf, were involved in Khan's dealings. It would, of course, be difficult to sanction Pakistan at this point in the war on terrorism. Yet, by accepting Karamat's nomination without an independent inquiry into Khan's allegations, the Bush administration is turning a blind eye to Pakistan's cover-up of the proliferation scandal.

In late September, during their first presidential debate, both Bush and John Kerry cited nuclear proliferation as the single greatest threat to U.S. security. Vice President Dick Cheney has said repeatedly that he is kept up nights by fears of a nuclear terrorist attack within the United States. Yet the Bush administration seems incapable of matching its professed concerns with action when it comes to Pakistan. Doing so would require that the administration confront the ugly reality that its chosen partner in the war on terrorism is also the source of the greatest danger facing this country. That, apparently, is a choice Bush and company are unwilling, or unable, to make. Until they do, the United States—and the world—will live in the shadow of a potential nuclear nightmare. ■

Social Security lies. House Call

BY NOAM SCHEIBER

THE BEST WAY to gauge whether the White House believes it is in a strong position to push Social Security privatization isn't to listen to what the president says—when he claimed a mandate for reforming the entitlement at his first postelection press conference. It is to consider what the White House is actually doing. And, so far, the only practical step the White House has taken is to search frantically for political cover from congressional Democrats. "At this moment, they're trying to find Democrats to embrace privatization, at least conceptually," says Representative Bob Matsui, the top Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee's Social Security panel. "So far, they haven't had any Democrats that I'm aware of say they would embrace this."

Of course, as Republicans' continued discussion of privatization attests, their behind-the-scenes skittishness hardly dooms the idea. But it does reflect an important political reality. Up until now, the media has portrayed the debate on Social Security as a toss-up between a number of vastly different privatization plans—from those requiring deep cuts in benefits to those that promise painless reform by relying on hazy financing—any one of which could carry the day. In truth, the political constraints on Social Security reform are such that, if Congress passes any privatization plan, it will involve the kind of accounting gimmickry that will make Bush's first-term shenanigans look tame by comparison. And that could be the worst outcome of all.

THE OBVIOUS STICKING point in privatizing Social Security is how you finance the transition from the current system—in which today's workers fund the benefits of today's retirees—to a system in which workers save partly for their own retirement as well. The problem is that any dollar you divert to fund private accounts is one less dollar available to pay for what remains of the existing system. So the burden is on privatization advocates to explain where they will get the money to bridge the gap.

Social Security wonks distinguish the various plans floating around Capitol Hill by the degree to which they acknowledge this financial hurdle. At one extreme are so-called free-lunch plans, like those sponsored by Representatives Paul Ryan of Wisconsin or Clay Shaw of Florida, or Senator John Sununu of New Hampshire. These create private accounts while guaranteeing that no one will receive fewer benefits than they do today. Proponents intend to fi-

nance this arrangement through huge borrowing (as much as \$7 trillion over the next several decades) or vague budget cuts, or some combination of the two. At the other end of the spectrum are the tough-love plans proposed by representatives like Arizona Republican Jim Kolbe and (recently defeated) Texas Democrat Charlie Stenholm, who want to finance the transition with deep cuts in Social Security benefits and modifications to the payroll tax. In the middle are plans like those of GOP Senator Lindsey Graham, which rely on substantial benefit cuts but also some slightly dubious budget savings from measures like closing corporate tax loopholes. The different plans require infusions of anywhere from \$750 billion to nearly \$4 trillion to pay for the initial decade of the transition, during which time no benefits would be cut.

As a general rule, the more honest the accounting (i.e., Kolbe-Stenholm), the more draconian the cuts to the current system. Which means that, given the political reality, the most honest proposals are the ones least likely to be enacted. Privatization advocates like to argue that, having now been through three consecutive elections in which candidates—not least of them the president—ran on privatization and won, Republicans have proved the "third-rail" status of Social Security to be a thing of the past and paved the way for more honest reform. But this proposition is dubious at best. The president has always been extremely vague about his Social Security plans and has never embraced the kinds of benefit cuts necessary to fund privatization, which are what make the idea so politically untouchable.

More problematic is the fact that the House GOP leadership, which has to protect its majority status every two years, still has deep reservations about taking up *any* privatization proposal, much less one that calls for sharp benefit cuts. "On the House leadership side, they'd just as soon not do this," says one Republican Senate staffer who works on Social Security issues. "I think they'd be the first ones to tell you that." Worse yet for advocates of responsible Social Security reform, the member of the House leadership who will exert by far the most influence on any proposal is the famously independent Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas. "Thomas in the past has been skeptical and resistant to things requiring tough choices," says an aide to one pro-privatization Democratic congressman.

Pretty much the only way to prevent Congress from embracing a gimmicky approach to privatization is for the White House to throw its weight behind a more responsible alternative. But, at this point, it's not clear the White House has any intention of even entering the debate. Both Kolbe and Sununu say the White House has yet to contact them with ideas, and a Republican staffer on the Senate Finance Committee acknowledges that the White House has yet to provide any instructions. *The Washington Post* recently reported that, at a meeting between Stenholm and White House aides this summer, the White House actually asked Stenholm for direction, rather than the other way around. (As thanks for his advice, the president and vice president

promptly went out and campaigned against him.) If and when the White House does offer a specific plan, it is hard to imagine it will include benefit cuts. "The reason you have seventy percent support for PSAs [personal savings accounts] is that it doesn't say, 'PSA and modest rejiggering.' You do that, and all of a sudden the focus is lost from the PSAs and shifts to, 'What's this modest rejiggering?'" says Grover Norquist, head of Americans for Tax Reform. "It's a very bad idea to have any benefit changes." Norquist adds that his conversations with White House officials lead him to believe they agree.

On top of all of this, it is widely presumed that, within the GOP ranks on Capitol Hill, the advocates of privatization care more about passing some kind of personal-account set-up than they do about making sure the accounts are adequately financed. "I don't think, in the end, you risk losing the [Lindsey] Grahams of the world. The people intrinsically in favor of individual accounts will swallow one with a bad budgetary impact," says Michael Tanner, who heads the *Social Security privatization effort at the Cato Institute*. On the other hand, skeptical House Republicans are worried enough about the prospect of deep benefit cuts to bolt from any effort to mandate them. That dynamic clearly pushes the discussion in the direction of gimmicky financing.

ULTIMATELY, THE EFFORT to "reform" Social Security could end up looking a lot like last year's effort to "reform" Medicare. In that case, the White House had initially hoped to bestow a goodie on seniors (a prescription-drug benefit) while introducing more competition into the program, which could have produced big savings (and big cuts) in the coming decades. But the president only laid out vague principles. And, when the political pressure became intense, the GOP stuck with its prescription-drug benefit, kicked its competition proposals years into the future—thereby winning the support of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the 800-pound gorilla of entitlement interest groups—and then monkeyed around with its numbers to make them appear to check out. Along the way, Republicans also managed to reward a key interest group—the pharmaceutical industry—by preventing the government from negotiating lower drug prices, which could have saved billions of dollars.

This time around, the president is likely to be no more specific than necessary to get the ball rolling on the Hill. Once he places Social Security on the agenda, Congress can coalesce around a plan that establishes private accounts—this year's goodie for seniors—but with few or no benefit cuts and no way to pay for it over the long term. (AARP recently announced that it opposes privatization but left the door open to private accounts that are "added on" rather than "carved out" of the existing system, leading some to suspect the organization is open to a deal.) The sop to conservatives, suggests Norquist, would be a vague promise to impose benefit cuts through future legislation, similar to the

backloading of the "pain" in the Medicare bill. Then, to make the numbers work out, the GOP will once again cook the books—this time exploiting a quirk in the way the Social Security actuaries evaluate the solvency of the trust fund. (The actuaries only consider whether the trust fund has enough money to pay benefits, not where the money comes from; the GOP can simply propose borrowing trillions of dollars from the rest of the federal budget and the actuaries will be forced to sign off.) And, of course, the GOP will take care to reward this year's choice interest group—the securities industry—on which it will likely rely to make the final lobbying push on the Hill. (According to a recent University of Chicago study, the securities industry could reap up to \$10 billion a year in fees from administering private accounts.)

The only real difference between last year's Medicare reform and the likely outcome of Bush's second-term Social Security reform is that the economic consequences of the latter could be far, far more severe. Bond markets and currency traders assume the government will eventually take the steps necessary to prevent Social Security from bankrupting the country. A plan that moves in the opposite direction by issuing trillions of dollars in new debt without any meaningful long-term cuts would shatter that assumption, driving down the value of the dollar, driving up interest rates, and potentially triggering a deep recession. Then again, what's a little economic crisis when your legacy is at stake? ■

In praise of wind power. Cape Hope

BY GREGG EASTERBROOK

THERE IS BROAD consensus in American politics about where energy should come from: Somewhere Else. Power plants? Not in my backyard. Coal to fire the power plants? Fine, so long as no one ever mines it. Nuclear reactors? Put them in another state. Solar power? Not if my neighbors install unsightly roof panels. Hydropower? Build the dams in Quebec. Natural gas? Just don't approve drilling for it on Western lands! Petroleum? Buy it from the Saudis; we don't want oil rigs where we can see them.

Right now, the energy option around which NIMBY sentiment is coalescing is wind power. Currently, just one-third of 1 percent of U.S. electricity is generated using wind—but that's at least three times as much as a decade ago. The first-generation wind turbines of the 1970s were unreliable and expensive, but recent technical advances have made large, wind-driven generators cost-effective for the first time. Most people's image of wind turbines comes from a project in Altamont Pass, California, which employs thousands

of decades-old turbines spooky-looking enough that they have been used as backdrops for science-fiction movies. Most are outdated models whose blades spin fast, making the structures deadly to birds, but whose kilowatts cost more than fossil fuel-based electricity. The newest wind turbines turn slowly, so that birds can see them, and produce power for less than the price of electricity from a new natural gas-fired power plant.

Several percent of U.S. electricity needs could be met, at market prices, by wind turbines—with zero greenhouse gas emissions, zero air pollution, zero waste product. Advanced wind turbines are not cheap to build, but, like hydropower dams, once constructed, they require only maintenance: No fuel input is needed, no foreign supplier can cut off the spigot, no fuel-price increase can lead to a shocking utility bill. You'd think communities would be rushing to embrace the wind alternative. You'd be wrong.

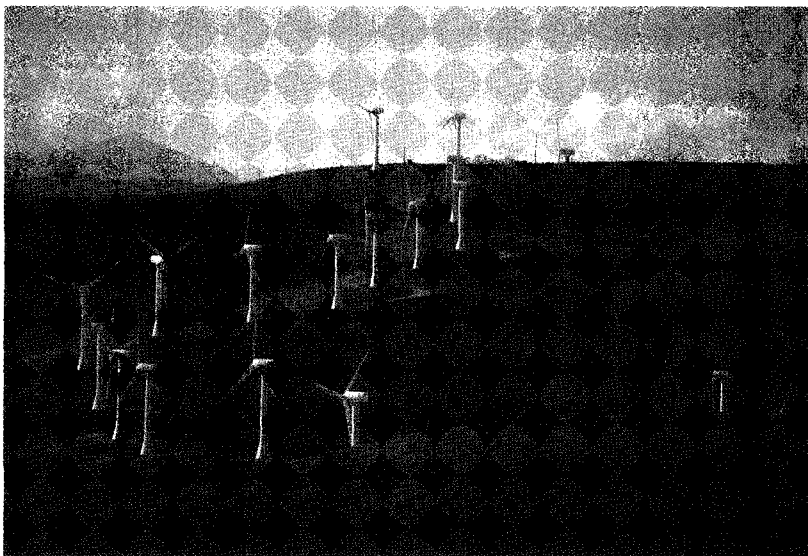
IN MANY PLACES where commercial-scale “wind farms” have been proposed, public opposition has been intense. The turbines, which look like enormous airplane propellers on poles, are denounced as technological monstrosities, though they represent the first phase of a benign, green-energy future. NIMBYS object chiefly to the aesthetics of wind energy—the turbines can be hundreds of feet high, marring coastlines, ridge-tops, and open spaces. People don't want their views obstructed.

The wind-power dustup of the moment involves a plan, courtesy of a company called Cape Wind Associates, to build a string of turbines about eleven miles offshore from Nantucket, Massachusetts, and a little under six miles from Martha's Vineyard. These near-coastal waters experience sustained winds almost all year and have a seabed shallow enough to build upon. (Someday wind turbines may be far beyond view in the open ocean, but, for the moment, only

coastal areas are practical.) The Cape Wind project would provide America's first offshore wind turbines and would comprise 130 windmill towers sticking out of the Atlantic, their hubs 260 feet above the waves and the tips of their blades 420 feet high at their apex. The turbines would produce an average of about 170 megawatts of electricity, enough to cover about 75 percent of the electricity demand from Cape Cod and its nearby residential islands. During peak winds, production would rise to about 420 megawatts, powering all of the Cape while producing surplus electricity that would replace that generated by fossil fuel in Massachusetts or elsewhere in New England.

But land in this area is prime upper-class beach-house territory, and the rich of Nantucket don't want windmills visible from the porches of their summer homes. “There's a selfish and entitled attitude on the part of many waterfront estate owners,” says James Gordon, president of Cape Wind. They have powerful representation. Senator Edward Kennedy—who, in 2001, said, “I don't think America can just drill itself out of its current energy situation. . . . We need smart, comprehensive, common-sense approaches that balance the need to increase domestic energy supplies. . . . [We should] promot[e] use of smaller, more flexible [electricity] generation facilities”—is leading the charge against the Cape Wind proposal. (Some of the turbines would be visible from the Kennedy family property in Hyannis.) Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney opposes the project because it would “impinge on the beauty of one of the great natural resources on the East Coast.” Which is true. Simulations suggest that, from Craigville, Cotuit, and a few other parts of the Cape, the turbines would loom across the horizon. But, from Nantucket, Edgartown, and other areas, the windmills would be visible only on perfectly clear days, and, even then, they would appear as distant sailing-ship masts. So some Cape Cod waterfront property-holders would have their views harmed. Others would have to squint even to know the windmills were there.

Last summer, the staff of the ponderously named Massachusetts Energy Facilities Siting Board endorsed the Cape Wind proposal, saying the production was needed and would help moderate the commonwealth's electricity prices. Recently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which has jurisdiction over the “navigable waters” of the United States, issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement that gave the Cape Wind project a clean bill of health. The wind turbines would cause “some avian mortality,” the Corps found, but it is “unlikely” there would be any significant change in local bird populations. The Corps commissioned a Visual Impact Assessment from an “architecture historian,” who determined that Cape Wind would have “adverse” aesthetic effects for the Kennedy's property, the Nantucket Historic



Opponents of wind farms, such as this one in California, complain that the turbines mar natural vistas. But wind power is kinder to nature than energy drawn from fossil fuels.

District, four other historic areas, and ten individual historic properties. (In some cases, federal law makes the view from historic sites an issue of public concern; the view from regular private property, which is what most Cape Cod homes are, is not.) When the Corps of Engineers approved the coastal windmills, *The Boston Globe* editorialized in favor of the project, saying the aesthetics of turbines in the distance along Cape Cod "may not be pleasant for some residents, but the supposed harm to a view is more than offset by the beneficial impact of clean Cape Wind power."

Nonetheless, opposition remains heated. It's not clear that the Army Corps of Engineers has authority to bless the project, so litigation may be in the cards. Opponents of the plan want Cape Wind to pay royalties to local governments, but royalties would price its electricity out of the market, making construction pointless. Kennedy has suggested that Congress pass legislation creating zoning regulations for offshore wind farms; presumably the fine print would be written to rule out the Cape Wind project. (John Kerry, who warmly endorsed wind power during the campaign, has declined to comment on the Cape Wind plan.) Owing to the number of rich vacationers who oppose the wind project, this is a rare case where citizens' groups have more financial muscle than their corporate opponent: The newly formed anti-wind Alliance to Protect Nantucket Sound raised \$1.8 million in 2003 and spent \$935,000 on legal fees fighting the project, while the Cape Wind company spent \$784,000 on legal fees in the same year.

IT'S NOT ONLY the affluent who oppose wind power on aesthetic grounds. Many Midwestern agricultural communities have sustained winds and open spaces in which to place tall turbines; wind-energy revenue is a potential boon to the family-farm economy. A smart writer wrote in 1994, "Perhaps in the next century Iowa farm boys will race their dogs toward secret clubhouses hidden among wind-energy towers and genetically engineered cottonwoods being grown for renewable fuels." (OK, that was me in *A Moment on the Earth*.) But, as Jim Carlton recently noted in *The Wall Street Journal*, environmental lobbyists and even some family farmers furiously opposed commercial wind turbines on farms in Kansas. Why? They don't want to have to look at the towers. They want their energy to come from that ideal place: Somewhere Else.

On a technical basis, it would be possible to put all electricity production out of sight by building lots of atomic reactors in remote areas. But, unless Kennedy and the moneyed waterfront property-owners of Cape Cod are willing to back a huge initiative to increase atomic power, they must face the fact that energy has to come from somewhere and that clean-wind energy is more socially responsible than fossil fuel-based alternatives. I love the view of the Atlantic waters off Nantucket and would rather there be no gigantic blades slowly rotating in the distance. But I also expect the lights to come on when I flip the switch, and so does everyone on Cape Cod. ■

Evaluating strict constructionists. How to Judge

BY JEFFREY ROSEN

DURING HIS POSTELECTION press conference, President Bush made it clear that he intends to appoint a reliable "strict constructionist" to replace the ailing Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist if and when he retires. According to administration officials, there are eight candidates on Bush's short list, all of whom fit the bill. Senate Democrats will try to distinguish between conservatives and moderates by focusing on the candidates' views of *Roe v. Wade*. But the more important distinction is between principled conservatives (who believe in deference to legislatures through judicial restraint) and conservative activists (who are determined to use the courts to strike at the heart of the regulatory state). The activists want to resurrect what they call the "Constitution in Exile," enforcing limits on federal power, that have been dormant since the New Deal, in part through narrow interpretation of the interstate commerce clause (see "Supreme Mistake," November 8). By this standard, four of Bush's candidates are troubling while the other four could be embraced by Democrats with cautious optimism.

THE CONSERVATIVE ACTIVISTS

SAMUEL ALITO JR., 54. *U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit*. Known as "Scalito," or little Scalia, he is considered less blustering than the big guy, but liberals will undoubtedly balk at his abortion record. In 1991, he dissented from a decision to strike down Pennsylvania's spousal notification provision—a decision the Supreme Court later upheld in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the decision that reaffirmed *Roe v. Wade*. What should be far more troubling to Senate Democrats, however, is Alito's 1996 dissent from a decision upholding the constitutionality of a federal law prohibiting the possession of machine guns. Applying the logic of the Constitution in Exile for all it's worth, Alito insisted that the private possession of machine guns was not an economic activity, and there was no empirical evidence that private gun possession increased violent crime in a way that substantially affected commerce—therefore, Congress has no right to regulate it. Alito's colleagues criticized him for requiring "Congress or the Executive to play Show and Tell with the federal courts at the peril of invalidation of a Congressional statute." His lack of deference to Congress is unsettling.

Janice Rogers Brown, 55. *California Supreme Court*. Of all the names on Bush's short list, this fire-breathing libertarian seems the most activist and the least judicious.

Brown has left no doubt about what she thinks of the post-New Deal regulatory state: She derisively described 1937, the year the Court began to uphold the New Deal, as “the triumph of our socialist revolution,” adding that “private property was a major casualty.” She has been the only dissenter in a series of cases on the California Supreme Court, arguing in the most intemperate and sarcastic terms for the invalidation of a host of regulations—from those governing age and disability discrimination to those controlling housing assistance for the elderly and disabled. (“Theft is theft even when the government approves of the thievery,” she wrote of public assistance.) She has even criticized Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’s famous ode to judicial restraint in his dissent from the progressive-era case that invalidated maximum-hour laws, and she has lambasted the modern Supreme Court for protecting economic rights less vigorously than other individual liberties. She has shown little interest in following precedents with which she disagrees, announcing, “If our hands really are tied, it behooves us to gnaw through the ropes.” And, in a 2000 speech to the libertarian Institute for Justice, which has strongly supported her candidacy, she announced: “Big government is not just the opiate of the masses, it is the drug choice for multinational corporations and single moms, for regulated industries and rugged Midwestern farmers and militant senior citizens.” On the brighter side, like other libertarians, she has vigorously enforced some Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable searches. But her inflammatory rhetoric led Senate Democrats to filibuster her nomination to the federal appellate court last year, and they would be justified in doing so again.

Edith Brown Clement, 56. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Unanimously confirmed in 2001, Clement has written little and therefore might be an appealing stealth candidate. But everything about her record suggests she is an enthusiastic supporter of the Constitution in Exile. This year, for example, Clement joined a blistering dissent by Judge Edith Jones objecting to the application of the Endangered Species Act to protect a rare species of underground bug. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had denied a group of Texas developers a permit to build a shopping mall on the bugs’ habitat, and Clement and Jones objected that protecting bugs was not a commercial activity, criticizing their colleagues for creating “a constitutionally limitless theory of federal protection.” The rest of her majority opinions and dissents as an appellate judge contain few clues about her judicial temperament, though she has been willing to enforce Fourth Amendment privacy claims in a few cases. In the absence of more information about her, Senate Democrats should approach Clement with caution.

Emilio Garza, 57. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Bush has made no secret of his desire to appoint the first Latino justice, but, last week, he nominated White House Counsel Alberto Gonzales as attorney general, a move some suggest is meant to shore up his credentials with social conservatives for a future Supreme Court nomina-

tion. Since Gonzales will help pick Rehnquist’s replacement, he may prefer to keep the Latino seat open for himself. Garza has long been the conservative Latino justice-in-waiting on the appellate bench, but he, too, will run into trouble over *Roe*. In 1997, his court’s majority struck down a Louisiana law that allowed judges to deny abortion to a minor (and to notify her parents), even if she was mature and the abortion was in her best interest. Garza concurred in the opinion, but he added an injudicious and unnecessary polemic criticizing the Supreme Court’s entire privacy jurisprudence. Garza doesn’t have much of a paper trail in federalism cases and seems like less of an enthusiastic partisan of the Constitution in Exile than his colleague Jones or the Washington lawyer Miguel Estrada, both of whom are also potential Supreme Court candidates. But his lack of respect for settled Supreme Court precedents should set off alarm bells.

THE PRINCIPLED CONSERVATIVES

J. MICHAEL LUTTIG, 50. *U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.* Conservatives view Luttig as a “conservative’s conservative” because of his willingness to take federalism to its logical conclusion. In a closely watched case, he dissented from his colleague J. Harvie Wilkinson’s decision to uphold the application of the Endangered Species Act to red wolves. (Luttig said that protecting red wolves isn’t a commercial activity and therefore Congress has no power to regulate it; Wilkinson objected that Luttig’s narrow vision of congressional power would “place in peril the entire federal regulatory scheme for wildlife and natural resource conservation.”) Because of the red wolves case, liberals fear that Luttig would put the Constitution in Exile into overdrive. But Luttig’s commitment to judicial principle is combined with a respect for judicial precedent: “At the end of the day, other than conscience, it is only analytical rigor, and the accountability that such renders possible, that can restrain a judiciary that serves for life and at the pleasure of no one,” Luttig wrote in 2001. In 1998, for example, Luttig wrote an opinion faithfully applying the Supreme Court’s reversal of a ban on partial-birth abortions, a decision with which he personally disagreed. Luttig has also shown an open-minded willingness to infer new constitutional rights from old precedents: Disagreeing again with conservative colleagues, he held that there is a constitutional right for people who have been convicted of serious crimes to have access to DNA evidence that might prove their innocence. As a Supreme Court justice, of course, Luttig would be free to rewrite precedents rather than be bound by them. But, if analytical rigor and precedent-based reasoning remain as touchstones of his jurisprudence, he might prove to be an independent and impressive justice.

Michael McConnell, 49. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. McConnell is the most respected conservative legal scholar of his generation, and liberals and moderates throughout the legal academy would enthusiastically

support his nomination. Liberal interest groups, unfortunately, would aggressively oppose it because he is personally pro-life and is also a vocal and effective critic of *Roe*. As usual, though, a single-minded focus on *Roe* would be misguided: McConnell has a deep respect for precedent. More than anyone else in the country, McConnell is responsible for persuading the Supreme Court to abandon the rigid church-state separationism that prevailed during the 1970s, arguing instead that the state should be neutral toward religion. As a result, he supports school vouchers, but, unlike Justices Scalia, Thomas, and Rehnquist, he argued that graduation prayers in public schools were unconstitutional even before the Court struck them down in 1992. On federalism, McConnell's record is especially encouraging. More than the other candidates on Bush's short list, McConnell believes that judges should defer to Congress's power to define illegal discrimination. His definitive studies of the original understanding of the Fourteenth Amendment have convinced him that its framers intended Congress, not the Court, to define and enforce protection of civil rights. As a result, McConnell has criticized conservative justices for holding that Congress may not define discrimination more expansively than the Court. In questions of economic rights, McConnell seems similarly concerned about judicial restraint: In a 1987 article titled "FEDERALISM: EVALUATING THE FOUNDERS DESIGN," he strongly criticized a leader of the Constitution in Exile movement, arguing that, whatever the initial intention of the interstate commerce clause, the dream of resurrecting long-forgotten limits on federal power is unrealistic: The "vision that the Supreme Court, having been informed of the founders' intentions now has in its power to restore the original constitutional scheme, is fanciful, and would not necessarily be desirable even if it were less so." For those who care about deference to Congress, McConnell's nomination would be especially welcome.

John Roberts, 49. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Washington, D.C., Circuit. Top of his class at Harvard Law School and a former law clerk for Rehnquist, Roberts is one of the most impressive appellate lawyers around today. Liberal groups object to the fact that, in 1990, as a deputy solicitor general, Roberts signed a brief in a case involving abortion-financing that called, in a footnote, for *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned. But it would be absurd to Bork him for this: Overturning *Roe* was the Bush administration's position at the time, and Roberts, as an advocate, also represented liberal positions, arguing in favor of affirmative action, against broad protections for property rights, and on behalf of prisoners' rights. In little more than a year on the bench, he has won the respect of his liberal and conservative colleagues but has not had enough cases to develop a clear record on questions involving the Constitution in Exile. On the positive side, Roberts joined Judge Merrick Garland's opinion allowing a former employee to sue the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for disability discrimination. He pointedly declined to join the

unsettling dissent of Judge David Sentelle, a partisan of the Constitution in Exile, who argued that Congress had no power to condition the receipt of federal transportation funds on the Metro's willingness to waive its immunity from lawsuits. In another case, however, Roberts joined Sentelle in questioning whether the Endangered Species Act is constitutional under Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce. The regulation in question prevented developers from building on private lands in order to protect a rare species of toad, and Roberts noted with deadpan wit that "the hapless toad ... for reasons of its own, lives its entire life in California," and therefore could not affect interstate commerce. Nevertheless, Roberts appears willing to draw sensible lines: He said that he might be willing to sustain the constitutionality of the Endangered Species Act on other grounds. All in all, an extremely able lawyer whose committed conservatism seems to be leavened by a judicious temperament.

J. Harvie Wilkinson III, 60. U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. The former chief judge of the Fourth Circuit clerked for Justice Lewis Powell, and this courtly conservative intellectual has long demonstrated Powell's sensitivity to judicial overreach. When he joined his colleagues in striking down part of the Violence Against Women Act as impossible to justify under Congress's power to regulate interstate commerce, he added a concurrence confessing his concerns about what he candidly called "conservative judicial activism": If the federalism revolution leads to the "wholesale invalidation of environmental, civil rights, and business regulation," he warned, then the new conservative judicial activists would be just as discredited as their liberal activist predecessors. The next year, Wilkinson showed his commitment to judicial restraint, upholding Congress's power to apply the Endangered Species Act to the protection of red wolves over Luttig's dissent. Wilkinson has written several important essays and scholarly articles trying to work out a principled conservative jurisprudence. In the most recent, he argues that the Court can best protect democracy by enforcing structural boundaries between Congress and the states and among the branches of the federal government, rather than by stringently upholding individual rights. Wilkinson also proved in the case of Yaser Hamdi, whom Bush designated an "enemy combatant," that he is willing to enforce judicial oversight of executive power—the central question in the war on terrorism. He has always insisted that the Court can bring the nation together by taking judicial restraint seriously, and his nomination could be a unifying gesture in a polarized time.

Democrats have to be realistic about a Bush nominee to the Supreme Court rather than be distracted by *Roe v. Wade*. Their best hope lies in a principled conservative judge as opposed to an activist eager to undermine Congress's power in the name of the Constitution in Exile. By this measure, Alito, Brown, Clement, or Garza may be worth a Senate fight. Luttig, McConnell, Roberts, or Wilkinson, by contrast, could well be distinguished appointments. ■

Can the deficit save the Democrats?

Debt Riders

BY CLAY RISEN

ANYONE WHO THINKS deficits don't matter to voters should look at the recently concluded Oklahoma Senate race. In Washington, the victory of Republican Tom Coburn over Democrat Brad Carson has been viewed through the prism of Coburn's extreme cultural conservatism—he favors executing doctors who perform abortions, among other things. But, in Oklahoma, the picture looks much different. In the primary, in which he handily defeated former Oklahoma City Mayor Kirk Humphreys, Coburn ran largely on a promise to cut pork-barrel spending and push a balanced-budget amendment. And, though national coverage of the general-election race was defined by Coburn's musings on “rampant” lesbianism in public schools, the race was actually more about fears of rampant government spending in Washington. During an early October TV debate, the candidates focused on highway funding, job creation, and Medicare reform, with only the occasional nod to abortion and other “moral” questions. In fact, one of the only significant mentions of morality came when Coburn attacked deficits as an unfair burden on future generations, a theme he continued to pound in ads following the debate. “I can assure you I'm not going to sit just quietly by as the Washington politicians keep driving up the deficit and spending away our children's future,” he promised. Voters bought it—a SoonerPoll.com survey in late September showed that 51 percent of Oklahomans preferred a senator who cut spending to one who brought money back to the state; only 31 percent felt the opposite. Carson responded to Coburn's anti-deficit strategy with accusations that his opponent would cut programs like Head Start and farm subsidies, a sensitive issue in Oklahoma. But voters weren't swayed. Though the race seemed close in the days before the election, Coburn won by a comfortable eleven-point margin.

It's a lesson Democrats should take to heart—and place at the center of their congressional agenda over the next two years. To be sure, no one should expect Tom Coburn to become the new best friend of spending-conscious Democrats. But his presence in the Senate, along with the increasing unease of many fiscal conservatives, presents Democrats with an opportunity. The Democrats can remake themselves as the party of fiscal sanity and paint the president's agenda as a waste of the country's future. They can work across the aisle with fiscal conservatives like Coburn to highlight Bush's most egregious proposals, and they can force the GOP leadership to make politically painful decisions about spending cuts for popular programs. They can also begin to

frame the deficit in personal—even moral—terms, perhaps by using Bush's rhetoric of an “ownership society” against him. With ownership, after all, comes responsibility, and, thanks to Bush, we all own a piece of America's crushing debt. Such a strategy could be even more effective if U.S. currency began to slip rapidly. If the deficit continues to grow, currency experts say the dollar will plunge, driving up inflation and putting the squeeze on working families. By voting against costly proposals while laying the country's worsening fiscal situation at Bush's feet, Democrats can give lie to the “tax-and-spend liberal” stereotype and set the stage for a candidate who promises to clean house, much as Bill Clinton did in 1992.

NATIONWIDE POLLS SHOW that Oklahomans aren't alone in their concern with the deficit. Not only do Americans understand what the deficit is, they want to see it reduced. A CBS/*New York Times* poll conducted in March tested voters' basic understanding of the nation's fiscal situation; 86 percent rated the budget deficit as at least a “somewhat serious issue” (50 percent said “very serious”), while only 13 percent expect the budget picture to improve “in the years to come.” And, in a Democracy Corps poll later that month, almost a third of respondents ranked “bad values, leaving debt to future generations” as one of the top two phrases they associate with deficits (“deficits are not that important” got only 12 percent, while “deficits are helpful to economic recovery” got just 10).

And not only do voters understand the deficit and its impact, they see it as a priority worth sacrificing for. According to an Associated Press/IPSOS Public Affairs postelection poll, they chose deficit reduction over further tax cuts by a two-to-one margin. Clinton understood the power of talking about deficits, which is why he made it such a priority during his presidential campaigns (it helped, too, that third-party candidate Ross Perot argued the need for fiscal responsibility). In 1992, he promised to cut the deficit in half over four years, crafting his economic stimulus plan to avoid deficit spending. His push resonated with voters, 56 percent of whom told exit pollsters that cutting the deficit was their number-one priority. After reducing the deficit to its lowest point since 1981, Clinton ran on a similar pledge in 1996, accusing his opponent, Bob Dole, of pushing an economic plan that would “blow a hole in the deficit.” And again, exit polls showed Clinton's deficit talk struck a chord with voters, who cited the president's economic and fiscal success as a key reason for giving him a landslide victory.

Bush has, of course, already blown a hole in the deficit, and his second-term agenda promises a repeat performance. Indeed, the deficit—which did not exist in 2001—has ballooned to epic proportions. It now stands at some \$413 billion (or \$574 billion, excluding the Social Security surplus). When they are not insisting that deficits don't matter, Republicans have been relying on estimates stating that, with continued economic growth, the deficit will drop substantially over the next year, perhaps to as low as \$320 billion. But that assumes current spending levels. "They didn't include the money for Iraq, they didn't include the additional funds spent for drought and hurricane assistance, and it assumed that nothing bad will happen over next year," says Stanley Collender, a fiscal affairs columnist for *National Journal* and a managing director of the consulting firm Financial Dynamics. "I know the administration says the deficit will fall substantially, but I think it will go up to the \$425 billion to \$450 billion range. And it will stay there, because everything else the president is talking about will cost more money."

Indeed, Bush's second-term domestic agenda is chock-full of big-ticket items, from Social Security privatization, to tax reform, to making his first-term tax cuts permanent, but he has yet to outline a way to pay for any of it. Taken together, even assuming he can hold discretionary spending to a minimum, Bush's agenda will cost \$5 trillion over the next decade. And that doesn't account for the tens of billions he will have to spend on military operations abroad. The war in Iraq alone has cost \$147 billion so far, according to the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, and Bush is expected to request another \$70 billion for Iraq in the coming months. If Bush insists on everything in his agenda and fails to raise revenue or cut other spending accordingly, he could easily push the deficit up by another \$200 billion over the next two years.

Even if Bush had a handle on government spending, the next four years would still be tough to navigate. For one thing, oil prices will continue to be a problem, and not just at the pump—high fuel costs hurt the freight and airline industries, causing inflationary pressure that ripples through the entire economy. Bush's second term will also see the first baby boomers begin to retire, straining the Medicare and Social Security systems. Any responsible president would have made preparing for these problems a cornerstone of his first term by pushing a responsible energy bill and socking away money to prepare for the country's looming entitlement costs. But not this president.

As a result of Bush's profligacy, a growing number of economists predict that, without an immediate attack on the deficit, the nation's foreign creditors—with whom we have a balance-of-payments deficit of \$600 billion—will begin to sell dollars rapidly. In fact, they have already begun to do so. As *The Financial Times* wrote ominously last week, "[T]he dollar sell-off has resumed amid fears that Mr. Bush's victory will bring four more years of widening US budget and current account deficits, heightened geopolitical risks and a policy of benign neglect of the dollar." J.P. Morgan has ad-

vised clients that the dollar's slide threatens economic stability worldwide. And, while no one knows when such a sell-off will take place, former Fed Chair Paul Volcker estimates there is a 75 percent chance it will happen in the next five years. To be sure, a weak dollar can be a good thing because it lowers the cost of U.S. exports, thus promoting domestic manufacturing and narrowing the trade deficit. But a rapid sell-off—spurred by fears that the United States will continue to live beyond its fiscal means by issuing more paper and reducing the value of existing overseas holdings—would drive up inflation and interest rates as the Treasury is forced to increase the return on investment in U.S. securities. This, in turn, would squeeze business investment and drive up mortgage costs. Overnight, the deficit could go from an abstract issue for most voters into a major pocketbook crisis.

HOW CAN DEMOCRATS use this opening to promote themselves as the party of fiscal restraint without coming across as blunt obstructionists? First, they need to disaggregate the deficit debate from Social Security and taxes. They can agree with the president on the need for reform in these areas and join wholeheartedly in Bush's call for bipartisan solutions. But they need to insist that none of it is possible if fiscal sanity doesn't return to Washington now. They should insist on reinstituting "pay-go" rules, a common-sense George H.W. Bush policy in which new programs had to be met with revenue increases to pay for them or cuts elsewhere. Those rules have been ignored under George W. Bush—despite unease among such Republican moderates as John McCain, Susan Collins, Olympia Snowe, and Lincoln Chafee, who earlier this year blocked the 2005 budget plan because the Senate leadership refused to reinstate them. It's an issue that John Kerry brought up occasionally in the campaign, and it's something the Democrats can insist on before entering into debates on Bush's forthcoming domestic agenda—such as his desire to make tax cuts permanent. The Democrats should also press Bush and the congressional GOP to make politically painful choices between pork-heavy spending bills (such as the upcoming \$300 billion transportation bill or the perennially stalled energy bill) and his core agenda of tax cuts and Social Security reform. And Democrats need to publicize the Republicans' addiction to raising the debt ceiling, which they have increased by \$2.1 trillion under Bush and want to raise by another \$650 billion during the coming lame-duck session.

But Democrats also need to cultivate their own ideas, starting with Social Security. Bush is pushing hard to allow Social Security participants to place up to 2 percent of their contributions into private investment accounts—a potential boon to the stock market, but one that will cost an estimated \$2 trillion over ten years. And, because Bush has not proposed a way to pay for his plan but has vowed not to cut current benefits, that \$2 trillion will likely be funded by more deficit spending, equal to 1.5 to 2 percent of GDP per year (roughly the equivalent of an Iraq-sized war every

Continued on page 27

MYTHS AND REALITIES: SAUDI ARABIA RE-EXAMINED

Oil, terrorism and politics
three years after Sept. 11, 2001

On Oct. 27, 2004, *The New Republic* assembled a panel to discuss and debate the myths and realities surrounding Saudi Arabia. Topics ranged from the facts brought forth by the 9/11 Commission report to political reform. Panelists examined the historic relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States, as well as what the Saudi government is doing to crack down on terrorism. Participants also discussed the pace of reform and the impact that it is having on the country, from progress for women to elections, and the Saudi people's views of the United States. The following is an edited transcript:

MARTIN PERETZ: How does the Saudi Arabia—U.S. alliance really work? What does the U.S. do for the Saudis, and what do the Saudis do for us? As the report on 9/11 points out, and a report by the Watson Institute at Brown University also argues, why were the Saudis so late — so grotesquely late — in coming to terms with their own terrorists, the terrorists who came from Saudi Arabia, and have now spread nearly everywhere? And why did they change? Why was there a rather surprising change, or a least a stark change in cooperation [and] intensity, in motivation after the bombings of May and November 2003 in Riyadh?

We have four very distinguished and expert guests. And I just want to raise a few questions, and since they have prepared remarks, they may or may not answer them.

THE PANEL

ROBERT JORDAN
PARTNER,
BAKER BOTTS, LLC;
FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO
SAUDI ARABIA

JAMIE GORELICK
PARTNER,
WILMER, CUTLER, PICKERING,
HALE & DORR;
FORMER MEMBER OF THE
9/11 COMMISSION

ADAM ZAGORIN
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT,
TIME MAGAZINE

FAYE BOWERS
INTELLIGENCE AND
NATIONAL SECURITY WRITER,
THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

MODERATED BY

MARTIN PERETZ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
THE NEW REPUBLIC

And then we will open the discussion, first among them and then to [the audience]. Ambassador Jordan, will you begin?

ROBERT JORDAN: For generations the United States' relationship with the Saudis has been about oil and military cooperation. It's been conducted at elite levels and our people have known very little about each other. I think Saudis in many ways considered themselves almost adjunct American citizens before 9/11. Thousands of them ... had vacation homes in the United States.

They've sent their kids to school here. And because they were no threat to overstay their visas and take a job away from an American worker, they had easy access to visas to come to the United States.

Sept. 11 changed all that. Because 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, we began to ask uncomfortable questions of the Saudis, and they didn't like being treated as terrorists. We began to realize that what the Saudis teach in their schools and preach in their mosques is no longer an internal Saudi matter; it's a matter of our national security. Issues of human rights, democracy and countering the ideological support for terrorism took on a new urgency. And the Saudis resented what they saw as kind of an overreaction on our part to 9/11. They saw us as excessively stereotyping all Arabs, especially Saudis, and as being insensitive to Arab and Muslim suffering in the Palestinian territories, and then later in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I think a significant milestone — as Marty alluded to — in the relationship was the terrorist attack on three Western housing compounds on [May 12,] 2003. I was there at that time. Thirty-four people were killed, including nine Americans. At that moment, I do believe that the Saudi leadership realized that al Qaeda really is intent on bringing them down first. This, I think, was verified by the report of the 9/11 Commission.

But after [the] attack in May 2003, we saw cooperation from the Saudis improving dramatically. We established a joint terrorism center. We now have Americans and Saudis sitting shoulder-to-shoulder in a secret location viewing intelligence [in] real time. So we're much closer to being partners in the war on terrorism.

JAMIE GORELICK: For decades the relationship [with Saudi Arabia] has been a central one for the United States, and the basic compact forged by FDR and Abdul Aziz has been, we help protect the Saudis, and they secure a supply of oil for us and our partners. That is not a sustainable basis for a relationship. First of all, public opinion in both countries is not in a good place. In this

country we were fast to recognize that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis.

There are few defenders of Saudi Arabia in the public arena. That's not to say that there aren't people who have high regard for the country, but the public is not enamored of the Saudis, and the same is true about us as Americans in Saudi Arabia. We rate very poorly among the population in Saudi Arabia. But our policies in Israel and Iraq, [and] our perceived hostility to Islam, make it very difficult, I think, for the royal family to move because they have public opinion very much against us.

Our principal recommendation with regard to Saudi Arabia is that we speak with candor with each other and that both sets of governments speak with candor to their populations and express why the relationship is important, what needs to change, and engage. And here we were very specific in saying that public lambasting of the U.S., of the Saudi government, and vice versa, is not helpful. Now, we can talk about specific things that could be done, but the need for reform has always fallen to the bottom of the bilateral talks. There was always something more pressing.

We hope to do our part in clearing the air a little bit by dealing with some of the myths. There is no getting around the fact that 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, but there is no evidence that the Saudi government had any participation in, or funded in any way, the attacks of 9/11, or for that matter al Qaeda, which is a notion that is strongly believed within our country.

However, there are many individuals within Saudi Arabia who have funded al Qaeda and have been reliable funders of al Qaeda, and they have funded the madrasses, which spew out people who have no skills and are filled with hate. Both of these are big problems.

After the attacks of 2003, the Saudi government came face to face with, I think, their own mortality. They really felt threatened. And their attitude both in terms of cooperation in the intelligence arena and looking hard at what they might do changed, and included within that were steps that they took to try to clamp down on the funding of al Qaeda. But our report called the United States to be a partner with the Saudis in moving it toward reform and in chang-

ing the conversation between the United States and Saudi Arabia from just about oil and security. It has to go beyond those two.

ADAM ZAGORIN: I thought I would say a couple of things about oil and then some of the structural impediments to an improvement in the relationship, which I think we're probably going to have to live with for quite some time. I forget what the latest numbers are, but Saudi Arabia is not the top supplier of oil to the United States, and neither is it the second — maybe the third [or] fourth. We get more oil from Venezuela and various other sources. Now, the fact that prices have gone up recently, some people have suggested that this means that OPEC is losing its grip, that they can't control anything. Other people have suggested that they're quite happy to have the price go up

**Jamie Gorelick:
"AFTER THE ATTACKS OF
2003, THE SAUDI
GOVERNMENT CAME FACE
TO FACE ... WITH THEIR
OWN MORTALITY."**

as long as they don't have to carry the blame for it, because they're racking it up on the cash register, so it works for them.

I certainly think if you look at Saudi actions over the course of this price increase that we've had recently, it may be true that Saudi Arabia's role as the swing producer in OPEC and as the lever and kind of arbiter of world oil prices has been shown to be somewhat deficient during this latest run up, but on the other hand, the Saudis have taken action to increase their supplies of oil. Therefore, one has the potential proposition that things would be worse had they not done so.

There are a lot of exogenous, non-Saudi factors that are related to the price of oil, like the price of natural gas and its role as a substitute for oil, and various production factors within the United States in particular, and so forth and so on, so that it's a complex picture. If [Saudi Arabia] were taken over by radical Islamic elements tomorrow, they'd still have to sell their oil, of course. So one could posit to some degree that oil would be sold because the needs of whatever successor government that there

might be — and I certainly don't see any on the horizon — would include the need for oil receipts.

Now, on the structural side we've got big visa restrictions on this country, which are going to continue forever. They're not specifically aimed at Saudi Arabia, but [there are] many targets of these visa restrictions. I don't see those going away. The military draw-down of the United States in Saudi Arabia has been somewhat significant in recent years. That has not prevented us from using certain facilities at the Sultan Air Base and elsewhere in the Kingdom.

FAYE BOWERS: I report on national security issues, which is mainly the U.S.'s war on terror, and certainly looking at the Saudi aspects of that. And I traveled to Saudi Arabia last December to report and write a four-part series on the effort Saudi Arabia is making in security and financial and other types of reforms, and what they're doing jointly with the U.S. and other partners. And, indeed, I found reform was taking place, and at least a great discussion of reform. And almost everyone I talked to seemed to be really excited about the possibilities for the future. They seemed to have really bought into Saudi Arabia's efforts to track down the terrorists and were on board with that. I think the religious and educational reforms are another story. That's something we would see in our country as moving at a snail's pace. But ... to them I think it was rather earthshaking.

MODERATOR: Can I ask Ambassador Jordan a question? When you would go to speak to certain officials urging them to look at the emerging evidence that terrorism was being supported from Saudi Arabia, would there be a difference [or] incredulity?

JORDAN: No. The response was ... uniformly one of sincerity and cooperation. At the same time, they would say, give us names and give us information and we'll go round these people up. And part of the problem we had — and this is reflected in the 9/11 Commission Report as well — it is so incredibly difficult to get those names.

I dealt with [the U.S.] Treasury Department continually and would ... ask for names and intelligence information that could be shared with Saudis so we could nab these

individuals, and rarely would we actually have names. When we did, we were able to freeze bank accounts [and] in some cases, detain these people. There were a number of people who were under surveillance by the Saudis, but it did not appear feasible to have a case that could be put together to round them up and bring them in. We got better at it.

MODERATOR: Is the Saudi government ... always so scrupulous about winning a conviction in court?

JORDAN: No, I don't mean to imply it that way at all. What I'm saying is, even sufficient probable cause to round these people up was sorely lacking in many instances. And the general counsel of the Department of Treasury, David Aufhauser and I, spent a great deal of time trying to get enough information to give to the Saudis. We were able to get better information as time went on. But there was not very much evidence on individuals.

By contrast, we did have some real successes on the charity front. For example, the Al Haramin charity finally has been closed. Some would say it has taken about a year too long for that to happen. But we found that their branches were actually supporting al Qaeda operations in Bosnia, Albania, Chechnya and East Africa. So those branches were closed down and the individual head of Al Haramin was finally removed from his position and is now under serious investigation.

MODERATOR: Was this a result of American intelligence not having information or not being willing to share information?

JORDAN: A little bit of both. In some cases you don't want to divulge sources and methods, and so we had, frankly, some difficulty in getting information out of our intelligence agencies from time to time. We also did not have — at least at the beginning — a sufficient working relationship with the Saudis. What information they had, they were reluctant to share with us. We were reluctant to share with them. And so it took us about a year after 9/11 before we were heading in the right direction in terms of this type of cooperation. It was extremely frustrating.

GORELICK: I would answer that question slightly differently. I think that puts way too much of a burden on the United States. The people with whom we would be asked to share the information were, in some instances, not reliable counterparties. And it suggests that the Saudis themselves were blind to what was going on in their country. I don't know what the ground truth is, but I don't believe that because once they felt threatened themselves in 2003, there was a sea change in their activity.

The fact is that they were — and I think still are — coming to grips with the Faustian bargain that they have made, which is that they have ceded whole parts of their government to religious elements that have either acquiesced then, or worst, fomented the kind of activity which produces an al Qaeda and which creates the conditions for

**Adam Zagorin:
"IT'S A DELICATE
BALANCE, BUT I THINK
THE KINGDOM IS NOT
OVERRUN WITH
VIOLENT, PLOTTING
ANTI-AMERICANS."**

people who agree with al Qaeda to function not only against ourselves, but against them. What they need to do is address that bargain.

JORDAN: Just for clarification, I'm not putting blame on anyone. I was trying to sort of explain historically what their interchange was, but I certainly agree that the Saudis have got to assume responsibility for identifying individuals. It shouldn't just be up to the United States, of course.

(Moderator turns to the audience for questions)

QUESTION: I'd like to just better understand the support for terrorism in Saudi Arabia. Just characterize that support. You mentioned the religious element. Are they growing? Where were they before 9/11? What's changed?

ZAGORIN: I wrote down a recent intelligence estimate before I came here. You can take that for what it's worth. I guess the popula-

tion is about 20 million. And there seems to be some agreement that there would be between 500 and 1,500 hardcore activists. [But] compared to the 20 million, it's a very minuscule figure. On the other hand, you don't need more than five people to ... commit some atrocity.

My sense is that there is a great deal of work to be done, and the trick here will be to maintain the discipline in these efforts going forward — not just next month and next year, but forever because ... the kind of institutional political structure ... lends itself to having these problems potentially continue unless vigilance is maintained.

It's a delicate balance, but I think the Kingdom is not overrun with violent, plotting anti-Americans. [There are] plenty of anti-Americans, but they're not violent and plotting.

BOWERS: I just wanted to add on a little bit to what Adam said from when I was there in December. I spoke with three intelligence officials who were participating in that joint counterterrorism center. And I think bottom line, truth be told, they don't know how many terrorists there are. Accurate numbers were never kept of people who went to the training camps in Afghanistan in the '80s or '90s and who returned. For a long time I think Saudi Arabia didn't believe it had a problem with terrorism, with extremism; they didn't see it until after those May and November attacks everyone talks about. But you know, the intelligence officials told me when I was there [that] there could be six, there could be 60, there could be 600, or 600,000. And so that's not a very ... comforting figure.

GORELICK: The only point I would make here is that if we focus only on those of whatever number [who] are the hardcore individuals dedicated to terrorism, we're really missing the larger and more dangerous picture. And we, in our 9/11 Commission Report, are very explicit about this — that there are two problems. There are the hardcore individuals, the religious zealots who have objectified Westerners and who have identified us ... as people who essentially don't deserve to live. And the only way to deal with them is to kill or capture them. I mean, they're not going to be retrievable.

The larger problem ... is this approval of

that behavior. And it's not just the fact that that approval is manifested in monetary support for terrorist activities or for imams who spew hate. It is that if we don't address those atmospherics, we will increasingly permit a view within the larger society that we are a greater threat than Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

QUESTION: I was just hoping you might explore with a little more granularity a few of the particular sources of anti-American attitudes in Saudi Arabia. I'm curious, for instance, to what extent does the population, or a substantial segment of it, sympathize with the objectives of al Qaeda, if not the methods?

BOWERS: I have a couple of responses to that. One is that I don't think the people are a monolith. I think we sort of have a perception here in America that everyone in Saudi Arabia is devoutly, rabidly religious. And I don't think they all share the same level of devoutness at all.

And I think the other thing that really formed perceptions ... was television. You know, they watched 24-hour cable like we do, but they see different pictures than we do. For example, in Iraq, they were seeing pictures of Iraqis being murdered every day — of Iraqi women, and children, and young men, and various things like that.

MODERATOR: I want to say something about the continuous allusions to Israel. There are about 25,000 Palestinians in Saudi Arabia. My own sense is certainly that in the elite, nobody gives a damn about the Palestinians. There is, in fact, the kind of inter-ethnic contempt for the Palestinians that I have never heard in Israel itself.

JORDAN: I think a lot of what you say is accurate about the way Palestinians are viewed in Saudi society, in terms of those who are actually in the kingdom. But the crown prince of Saudi Arabia has spent a great deal of money on hospitals and hospital care for injured Palestinian children who ... are brought to Saudi Arabia for treatment.

And so what do you do to turn the hearts and minds around? I think the 9/11 Commission Report, again, has some pretty good suggestions in that regard. It requires citizen exchanges. It requires a smarter visa

policy in the United States to let the students back in if they can be cleared for security reasons. It requires reaching out to both societies instead of what I fear is happening, which is kind of a mutual disgust with each other right now, and I think that is the great danger in the relationship.

GORELICK: We looked at this issue of whether the hostility is the product of our policies or the product of this mix of political and religious zeal. And we certainly did not conclude that if we changed our policies, this problem would go away. So I think it is a false choice to say, well, is it our policy, or is it a religious zealotry, or political religious zealotry — it's both. And if you only see one piece [of] it, you're going to miss the fuller and more accurate picture.

Faye Bowers:
**"I THINK WE SORT OF
 HAVE A PERCEPTION HERE
 IN AMERICA THAT
 EVERYONE IN SAUDI
 ARABIA IS DEVOUTLY,
 RABIDLY RELIGIOUS."**

QUESTION: [What are some] of the comments the panelists might have on local elections in Saudi Arabia?

JORDAN: They are now scheduled for February. Registration to vote will begin next month. Unfortunately, it appears that women will not be allowed to vote or to run for office, even though one woman had announced her campaign to run already. Apparently, the give and take within the royal family, calibrating exactly how far they can go without using traction with their people, has, at least for the moment, stalled the ability to include women in this round. There is a lot of hope that they will be included in future rounds.

BOWERS: I have a very good friend and colleague who is a Saudi journalist, and she wrote [a] story about the woman who had initiated her own campaign, and it was quite disappointing that she won't be able to run. But this woman also told me — and from women that I spoke to in their homes in Saudi Arabia — that women there don't want

the process to go too quickly either. That's sort of shocking to me as a woman to find that they don't want to go too fast. But that is what many of them said.

QUESTION: I am truly mystified as to what the outlook is for any positive result in our relationship with Saudi Arabia and lots of other countries [that] are Islamic.

JORDAN: Well, the hill is an extremely steep hill to climb, but I do think there are some points of hopefulness. One of the most important things that I worked on during my tenure as ambassador was Saudi accession to the ... World Trade Organization. Not because it was doing them a favor, but because it is in the United States' interest to see a stabilization and a rule of law that is implemented in their trade relations. This will require them to open up to foreign investment. They have already passed most of the major legislation that is required for qualification to the WTO. They are awaiting the bilateral agreement with the United States.

BOWERS: I just want to add one last thing. To me it's particularly helpful to look at other people as other people or like yourself. I think when you engage man to man or woman to woman with people in that part of the world, they're just like we are. Moms have concerns about their kids going to school — getting a good education and getting a job at the end of that time.

They worry about their boys maybe being exposed to extremism or radical views. But they have the same sorts of wishes and motives that we do. And I think it really helps a lot to look at people as just people like us.

To view the complete transcript from the event online go to:
http://tnr.com/panel/panel_saudi_future.mhtml

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year for a decade). Privatizers argue that the stock market boost from such an influx of cash will stimulate growth and more than make up the transition cost, a position few objective analysts support. But, because the Democrats have not put forward a plan of their own, the administration has avoided owning up to its fiscal irresponsibility by saying the alternative is to do nothing.

When Tim Russert asked Karl Rove about funding Bush's Social Security plan on "Meet the Press" after the election, the Bush adviser gave a preview of what Democrats can expect to hear repeatedly during the next four years: "There's one cost that hasn't changed, and that is the cost of doing nothing . . . for your kids—for your boy and my boy, and for their children, for our kids and grandkids. It's a real big question as to whether or not the system's going to be there." Rove, of course, completely ignored Russert's question, which was about how Bush intends to pay for his plan. It's frustrating to hear such artless dodges, but it's a frustration of the Democrats' own making—so far, Rove has a point: There is no alternative. As Peter Orszag of the Brookings Institution notes, "The Democratic Party has a problem on Social Security because there are too few Democratic policymakers who have put forward proposals to address the problem."

It doesn't have to be that way. According to Alice Rivlin, who ran Bill Clinton's Office of Management and Budget, "In regards to Social Security, there are several points to get across. One is that it's a fixable problem, not a monster. A small amount of additional revenue and modest benefit cuts will solve the problem for a good long time." One possible cut could come from a slight increase in the retirement age to adjust for increases in life expectancy. Another could come from raising the maximum income level at which the Social Security deduction is imposed (\$87,000 in 2003). Additional revenue could be gained by incorporating some 4 million state and local government workers who are currently excluded from Social Security into the system. According to a study by Orszag and Peter Diamond, an economics professor at MIT, these steps would go a long way toward resolving the Social Security gap that will emerge over the next few decades as baby boomers retire. Such a plan would then allow Democrats to launch a critique of Bush's plan on its own terms—noting, for example, that deficit spending of such a magnitude would be bad for the nation's bond market, which, as Institute for International Economics Senior Fellow Adam Posen noted recently, "will be asked to absorb another \$200 billion a year in government paper on top of today's deficit" under Bush's plan.

THESE IDEAS, HOWEVER, can't come exclusively from within the party—Democrats also need to reach across the aisle to fiscally conscious Republicans. It's easier than it sounds. Newly elected GOP Senators Tom Coburn and Jim DeMint, though reviled by liberals as cultural reactionaries, are also committed deficit hawks. And they join senators like McCain,

Chafee, Snowe, Collins, Chuck Hagel, and Lindsey Graham, who have already made deficit reduction during the second administration a personal priority. Judd Gregg, the incoming chair of the Senate Budget Committee and another deficit hawk, told the Manchester, New Hampshire, *Union Leader* last week that, "as we look into the future and ask what are the biggest public policy issues beyond fighting terrorism, [they are] getting the deficit under control and addressing the demographic tidal wave that is heading for us." These Republicans need to be supported but also held to their word. "I'm waiting to see if the fiscal conservatives stop being all talk," Collender says. "Every January, they say, 'We've got to deal with this,' and then we never hear from them." At best, an emerging bipartisan dialogue can give the impression of a "fiscal sanity consensus" opposed to the White House and congressional leadership's profligacy. Naysayers will argue, rightly, that maverick Republicans might hem and haw over the deficit but, in the end, will cave to their president and party. But this could work in Democrats' favor as well—showing all the more clearly why the GOP is no longer the party of fiscal responsibility.

Above all, Democrats need to figure out how to talk about the deficit in ways people outside think tanks can understand. One possibility is to highlight all the ways the deficit drains the family budget. As Rivlin notes in a recent paper written with Isabel Sawhill, Brookings' director of economic studies, by 2014, the deficit will have reduced the average household income by \$1,800. And, by driving up interest rates, "a family with a \$250,000, thirty-year mortgage will pay an additional \$2,000 in interest." Moreover, a continued drop in the dollar will soon begin to push up prices on imported goods, contributing to inflation and further pinching already squeezed pocketbooks. Borrowing from Coburn, the Democrats could also begin to discuss the deficit in quasi-moral terms, using Bush's penchant for deficit spending as a retort to his rhetoric about building an "ownership society." After all, in a democracy, we all "own" the government, but with ownership comes responsibility. Bush, entrusted with that responsibility, has wasted the country's resources for political gain.

Of course, success in talking about the deficit is all a matter of how you frame it—people know deficits are bad, but they won't vote on them without prompting. That's why the Democrats need not only the right policies and rhetoric, but also party unity and consistency. (Fortunately, two of the Democratic caucus's thorns, Zell Miller and John Breaux, are out of office come January.) It means raising deficit reduction to the level of mantra, refracting other issues—foreign policy, Social Security reform, education—through its lens. It means denying Republicans the easy excuse that the market will solve everything. It means making Bush explain how he plans to pay for his agenda without encumbering future generations or leading us into a fiscal crisis. It won't be easy, but it's the right thing to do. And, for those thinking about how to retake the White House in four years, it's the smart thing to do, too. ■

BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS Rites of Stardom

THE PEOPLE WHO MADE **ALFIE** might be surprised to hear their film called anti-Aristotelian. All they did was move the setting of Michael Caine's 1966 success to New York, with Jude Law now in the lead, and turn this English smoothie loose on American women. Still, the screenplay by Charles Shyer and Elaine Pope, based on the original by Bill Naughton, is just a series of episodes: it has no trace of the structure that has supported drama and comedy for two millennia. Alfie, personable and single-minded, simply glides from bed to bed, and at the end is more or less unchanged—the same blithe, appreciative amorist he was at the start. No peripeteia, no anagnorisis. Aristotle bows to Eros.

This New York version folds in a touch of racial tension, and there is a momentary (so to speak) erectile problem along the way, but there really isn't any strand that could reasonably be called drama or that would make Alfie anything like a formal protagonist. He is just ("just"!) Don Juan on a motorbike in Manhattan, chauffeuring a limo for a living, acquiring his *mille e tre*. One secret of this film's success is the secret of Alfie's success: we don't want anything more from him than what he wants—the pleasure of his adventures.

The new version confirms this screenplay as a rite. Michael Caine, before his *Alfie*, had made some films that convinced producers he was ready for cinematic beatification. They were right: by making *Alfie*, Caine became—rather, was revealed as—a star. Jude Law has made many films before his *Alfie*, but his progress was hindered because, most of the time, he was asked to transform—to be a Soviet soldier in *Enemy at the Gates*, or

a Confederate soldier in *Cold Mountain*. Charles Shyer, who also directed, and others realized that if they stopped pretending that Law is not extraordinarily handsome, that if he had a part that really concentrated on his looks and charm, they would convert an uncomfortable leading actor into a scintillation. The *Alfie* rite of passage that glorified Caine has worked yet again.

ALFIE
(Paramount)

CALLAS FOREVER
(Here! Films)

The women whom Alfie attracts are so enticing that his success with them only increases his horizontal stature. Marisa Tomei as a single mother (whose little boy Alfie adores, which of course gives his character breadth), Susan Sarandon as a luxe sophisticate, and Nia Long as the woman with a surprise for him all keep the brio bubbling. Shyer, besides directing brightly, has provided plenty of striking views of Manhattan and, with Padraic McKinley, the clever editor, has kept the whole account visually nimble with split-screen shots and comic freeze frames.

But a chief element in *Alfie*, the old one and the new, is his comments to us, his treatment of us as companions. He talks to us all through the film, and thus, without being a braggart, he has witnesses of his prowess. What more could a rampant lover want than people who know of his success? Casanova had to write a huge autobiography to record his triumphs: Alfie has us with him all along.

This film, despite its breezy anti-classicism, ends where serious works have often ended throughout Western history. Alfie, pausing for breath, puzzled, asks us: "What's it all about?" Sophocles and Shakespeare and Chekhov ultimately asked the same question. What's more, Michael Caine used the line as the title of his autobiography.

Franco Zeffirelli has been very busy for

at least fifty years, designing and directing operas and films. Much of the time he has been aesthetically ostentatious; once in a while his talent beats out his ego. His new film, **CALLAS FOREVER**, gives both talent and ego equal shares. Among the highlights of Zeffirelli's life was his work with Maria Callas: he designed and directed some of her best-loved opera productions. And now he has made a film about her.

His screenplay of *Callas Forever*, he says, is built on his fantasies about her and on the facts of his friendship with her. In 1977, Callas, played by Fanny Ardant, is living in Paris, more or less convinced that her career is over (she is in her fifties). A longtime friend and director persuades her to do a new project. This friend is called Larry Kelly, transmuted from Zeffirelli presumably so that Jeremy Irons could play the role. Larry concocts the scheme of filming *Carmen* with Callas, lip-synching her recording made some years earlier when she was in the fullness of her voice. Through some magical movie means, her face will be made to look the right age.

After a lot of diva fussing and flurry, Callas agrees, and we see the filming of sections of the *Carmen* film, under the hand of a fictitious Portuguese director. Zeffirelli of course directed these sequences for his present picture, and they are gorgeous. Francesco Rosi's film of *Carmen*, made in 1984, is better—is one of the very best opera films ever made—but Zeffirelli's *Carmen* sequences here are thrilling. Nonetheless, when this lip-synched *Carmen* is finished, Callas changes her mind. She refuses to have it released.

The fantasy element of Zeffirelli's script is that this *Carmen* film was never actually made. Zeffirelli dreamed up the whole idea perhaps out of what he wished had happened in 1977—which had to include Callas's quashing of the finished film, because it doesn't exist. At least, however, it gives us the chance to hear bits of her *Carmen* magnificently re-recorded. Besides, elsewhere in *Callas Forever*, we hear Tosca's "Vissi d'arte" and, over the closing credits of the picture, "Casta diva." I hold that Rosa Ponselle's singing of that aria from *Norma*

is one of the peaks of vocal recording, but I must confess that the Callas rendition here is transfiguring.

The facts of Zeffirelli's experience with Callas are presumably the base of the Irons and Ardant performances. Irons, decked with a ponytail, works like a true actor, from the inside out, creating a man who adores and battles Callas. (Zeffirelli, for his own reasons, insists that we see something of Larry's homosexual life.) Above all, there is Ardant's performance as Callas. She played a Callas character in the Paris production of a play by Terence McNally; but here, direct-

ed by a man who really knew the soprano, Ardant is marvelously genuine: fiery, petty, exalted, a woman who, like many stars, is nervous much of the time about a misstep, and yet insists—has to insist—on her divinity. Ardant is so pyrotechnical that she reminded me of a Callas story. A law officer once made his way backstage at some opera house and, fulfilling the legal requirements, touched Callas with a writ that he had to serve on her. She exploded. "You can't touch me!" she stormed. "I have the voice of an angel!" Anyone who doubts that story is not an opera nut—merely a rational person. ■

member day that the Museum of Modern Art celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary. Forty blocks south, at Phillips, de Pury & Co., a vinyl serigraph by Barbara Kruger, a photograph of a hand holding a sign that reads, "I shop therefore I am," sold for more than \$600,000, leading a prominent dealer to remark, "People want quality, and this was quality."

I have never wanted to like a museum renovation as much as I wanted to like this one. And my reasons have everything to do with quality, though not the Barbara Kruger kind. The artists and the museumgoers whom I know want this renovation to work—they want MoMA to shimmer—precisely because so many of them grew up in the Museum of Modern Art and there discovered what excellence was, and now they know how desperate is the need for a place where a new generation can go and grapple with questions of quality. John Elderfield, the chief curator of Painting and Sculpture, and his distinguished colleagues will argue that they are merely following the modern tradition wherever it leads. They are also glad to remind us that the immense contemporary galleries—where they have parked some work by Matthew Barney and Andy Warhol and Chris Ofili (whose *Prince Amongst Thieves* is a mixed-media painting including glitter and elephant dung)—offer nothing more than a working definition of the state of quality now. But the issue is not Barney or Warhol or Ofili, all of whom will continue to be bought and sold and praised whether the curators at the Modern exhibit them or not. The issue is that for more than forty years, since MoMA began to ratify contemporary taste with its presentations of Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, and Jean Tinguely, the museum has been using Picasso, Matisse, Mondrian, and Brancusi as negotiating positions in an art-world futures game. Forty years ago the critic Thomas B. Hess, a brilliant thinker virtually all of whose work is now out of print, wrote that "the Museum of Modern Art is a useful indicator of the fluctuations in official, big-money taste (which it leads)," and that remains true today, except that official taste has become more official and the money has become bigger.

I was first taken to the Modern by my parents in the 1950s. As an adolescent in the 1960s I haunted the place during family visits to New York. And in the 1970s I was always there with painter friends, learning from what was on the

JED PERL ON ART Modern Immaturity

THE RE-OPENING OF THE Museum of Modern Art is exhilarating and dismaying in almost equal proportions.

The timing is certainly perfect, for we are in the midst of one of those stretches of pellucid autumn weather when Manhattan is the apple of the whole world's eye and a visit to the museum's talismanic Midtown location can give you an old-fashioned Gotham City lift. The museum, which has spent more than \$400 million on a renovation and expansion so vast that it amounts to a whole new building, has surely found the right man for the job. Yoshio Taniguchi, MoMA's architect, brings an opulent delicacy to this daunting project. His mingling of stone and metal and glass is a new version of the classic MoMA experience—an experience of moving through spaces that are quietly, transparently luxurious, in their own way as intoxicating as the glass of champagne or the dry martini that you drink later, after leaving the museum, in one of the neighborhood's watering holes. The good news at MoMA—the building and the relatively straightforward installations of selections from the museum's collections—is so encouraging that when the bad news hits you may find yourself reeling. Far from accepting the hard fact that the time

has come to embrace a solid maturity, a maturity grounded in an assessment of its glorious past that is at once forthright and modest, the Modern has insisted on remaining the aging hipster who long ago had one too many of those martinis and fled midtown Manhattan in search of the next snort of art-world cocaine.

For the moment the Modern's triumphs and the Modern's fiascos are suspended, contradictions without a resolution, amid the refinements of Taniguchi's architecture. The sad truth, though, is that as you go through the museum, you are probably going to find it difficult to keep the triumphs and the fiascos apart for very long, because the aging hipster has forced the museum's great collections into a dismayingly frozen form, while those priceless holdings in early twentieth-century art are being used further to inflate the prestige of a sicko contemporary art market. MoMA, while it has sometimes purveyed an ivory-tower vision of art, has never been far from the hurly-burly of the art world, and the unspoken crisis at the heart of the museum today is that the director and many of the trustees and the curators are at least as conscious of the market as they are of the classics that they hold as a public trust. As for the state of the art market, all you have to do is look at the news that came out of the auction rooms on the very No-

MUSEUM OF
MODERN ART,
NEW YORK

walls. Even back then I could see that the museum gave off some weird vibes, which had a lot to do with the futures game that was going on in the back rooms and the temporary exhibitions and the final galleries of the permanent collection, where the curators made predictions as to what was going to last. If the museum has always had a way of appearing sleekly confident one moment and peevish the next, it is because its great collections have never exactly given its wildly ambitious staff the commanding presence in the contemporary art world that many of them craved. The disjunction between the museum's classic collections and the business that it does in contemporary art is now more pronounced than ever before. While there are still many artists who believe that the past is a guide to the future, they are not generally the ones whose work is selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars, which puts the museum in the position of shilling for a bunch of artists who at best, as in the case of Brice Marden, have a rigidly academic understanding of the classics, or more generally do not understand them at all.

Ironically, for a museum that has always wanted to embrace the cutting edge, the Modern has never figured out how to present the kind of art that came of age in the renovated industrial spaces of downtown New York. Even the work of an original such as Robert Gober, that master of disquietude, can look glib in the what's-hot-now barn of a space where contemporary art is presented on the second floor. As for the core of the permanent collection, the masterworks imposingly arrayed on the fifth floor are given a more icily routinized presentation than ever before. The installation of art since 1945 feels curiously unconfident. And the long list of artists who are sidelined or overlooked in the galleries devoted to painting and sculpture and prints and drawings tells us exactly how little the museum cares for the views of the honorable opposition—an honorable opposition that has been a force to be reckoned with in New York since well before Hess registered his protest some forty years ago.

II.

WHEN GLENN D. LOWRY, MoMA's director, refers to this as the *new* Museum of Modern Art, he may

not know how right he is. There is a sense in which the Museum of Modern Art no longer exists, if we mean by that the museum where Alfred H. Barr Jr. was the guiding force from the beginning, in 1929, well into the 1960s. That museum was a unique institution, a one-time event in history, where not only was all of modern visual culture exhibited, but where the scholarly study of modern art was also to a large degree defined, and where the audience for modern art as we know it can be said to have been invented. In place of that unique institution we now have a museum that is in some sense like all other museums, with a permanent collection that is its capital—its *raison d'être*—and a staff that should be devoted to that collection and to the kind of scholarly pursuits and temporary exhibitions that build on its essential meanings.

The old Modern was to a large degree an act of self-invention. Barr and his colleagues put certain facts on the ground; they created a certain reality. The new Museum of Modern Art must preserve that reality and see that it lives on. It ought not to surprise us that the museum has maintained, at least for the moment, a fairly straightforward presentation of art from Cézanne through the Surrealists, except for all the wild speculation about its future form that the museum has engaged in over the past eight or ten years. To go through *Imagining the Future of the Museum of Modern Art*, a volume published in 1998 that featured the offerings of the ten architects who were invited the previous year to help reshape the museum, is to confront speculations about the nature of the museum and the city that are often recklessly abstruse and self-absorbed. And before temporarily closing its doors on West 53rd Street and moving out to Queens for several years, the museum went through a year-long upheaval known as "MoMA2000," which involved anti- or non-chronological hangings and a series of tiny theme shows offered like glittery boutiques at a shopping mall.

For years now there has been a desire, on the part of people both inside and outside the museum, to escape from the fairly straightforward presentation of the collections that had been evolving for sixty years and had come to be called, as if it were some Stalinist plot, "the story." I have to say that I am tired of this whole line of thinking—of being told that MoMA's permanent collection

galleries used to be a one-way street, a conveyor belt with the Great Tradition arrayed in neat rows. The Modern was never the wearisomely oppressive experience that it is now often said to have been. There was an intensity about that unfolding succession of galleries; they conveyed the authentic fever of belief. It was inspiring, even if it was also sometimes infuriating. And you were free to look at the paintings one by one, you were free to walk back from one room to another, you were free to overlook certain things and to love some more than others, you were free to decide that you preferred certain works that were not in the collection to the ones that were.

Barr and William S. Rubin—who was for all intents and purposes Barr's successor in the late 1960s until his retirement in the 1980s—promoted and presented some of the very ideas and values that their detractors accuse them of overlooking. To say that their Modern had no use for metaphor and narrative is simply untrue; Barr and Rubin showed Klee in great depth, they explicated the complex psychological and mythological dimensions in Picasso. And the aspects of the twentieth century that the Modern from time to time de-emphasized made others curious about the lacunae; it was the power of their vision that, practically since the beginnings of the museum, spurred a variety of countervisions. Some people now assume that any form of authority is a form of oppression, but authority is also a spur to creativity, to original thinking, to independence, and that was how the old Painting and Sculpture collection affected several generations.

I EXPECT THAT MANY PEOPLE ARE going to cling to the new fifth-floor installation as if it were an oasis in a desert. I did, at least when I first visited the new museum. After the shambles that the Modern made of the work of its two favorite artists little more than a year ago with "Matisse Picasso," a misbegotten exercise in the principle that opposites attract, it is a huge pleasure to see Matisse and Picasso left more or less to their own devices. Visitors are going to be so damn glad to see some of MoMA's paintings and sculptures—as well as the wonderful prints and drawings and the Atgets in the photography galleries. And the Modern made an inspired move when it acquired Ellsworth Kelly's immense *Sculpture for a Large Wall*, the work designed in the 1950s for

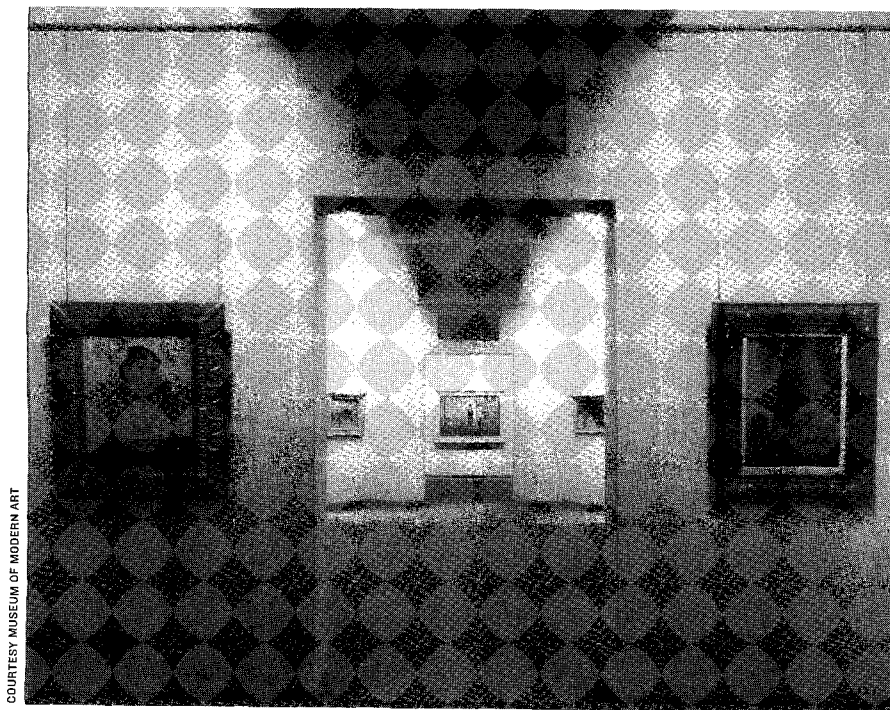
the Transportation Building in Philadelphia that now does itself proud in one of the immense sixth-floor galleries.

But the more I looked, the more I became aware of what was not on display. There is an argument for not making too much of specific inclusions and exclusions, since the museum has a vast collection and had to make hard choices about what to show, and is surely committed to rotating the permanent collection, at least to some degree. I can forgive them for removing Vuillard from the opening galleries, and I can live with the museum's

from this period, when Matisse lived in Nice and made his most searching inquiries into the human figure as a three-dimensional volume. More than a decade ago, when William S. Paley left his collection to the Modern, it contained two great Nice-period Matisse's, which William Rubin wrote were "acknowledged masterpieces" that would "help redress the imbalance" in the collection. And yet this side of Matisse's art—these paintings of the female figure that rival the work of Giorgione and Titian—remains in storage.

haps excessively close connection with a particular trustee, Patricia Phelps de Cisneros, who has given these works to the museum. While artists such as Jesús Rafael Soto and Hélio Oiticica may deserve a hearing, these choices, which the curators surely want us to believe show that they are thinking outside the box, cannot mask the fact that when it comes to art that fails to walk the old Ab-Ex-to-Pop-to-Minimal-to-Conceptual line, the museum remains indifferent. Such extraordinary American geometric painters as Ilya Bolotowsky and Burgoyne Diller—whose work would complicate and enrich the current view of the 1960s—are still disregarded. And while the Museum of Modern Art has not been willing to accept Balthus as a central figure in the art of the second half of the twentieth century, it at least used to be scrupulous about saluting his achievements in the 1930s—until now, when I look in vain, even as such return-to-realism incompetents as Elizabeth Peyton and Luc Tuymans and Peter Doig are given a warm welcome. And although a good deal of fuss is made about the continuing relevance of intaglio techniques in the print galleries, it is Damien Hirst who gets the nod, while Morandi, whether as a printmaker, a draftsman, or a painter, is invisible. Also absent from this graphics offering is Bill Jensen, the most formidable intaglio printmaker of the moment, although Deborah Wye, the current curator of Prints and Illustrated Books, once devoted a small MoMA show to his work.

The *Masterpiece Theater* presentation of early twentieth-century art probably accelerates an inevitable process by which the MoMA collections, although they are unparalleled in their depth and strength, are losing the totemic power that they once had. The sight of *Les Femmes d'Alger* or *Broadway Boogie Woogie* will still bring a rush of excitement, but there is so much extraordinary modern art on display in the world today—elsewhere in New York, in Washington, in London, in Paris—that one is now emboldened to do comparisons that, while not bringing the Modern up short, place it in more of a dialogue with other collections of modern art. Barr's sense of the grandeur of modern art as an incremental leap within the Great Tradition has become generally accepted. And his populist ambitions, which inspired him to give the museum the quality of a social club and even an ongoing carnival, have not only educated America but have led



The Museum of Modern Art's first exhibition, November 7, 1929

traditional lack of enthusiasm for Gris. But the more I reflected on what I was seeing, the more the selections seemed to suggest the freezing of the permanent collection into what amounts to an exaggerated caricature of its old self—an exercise in iron-clad formalism with little cake-decoration spritzes of Dadaism thrown in.

And by the time I had been in the permanent collection for a couple of hours, the weird vibes were coming straight out of the galleries full of modern masters. Most disturbing, especially considering that Elderfield is an internationally acknowledged expert on Matisse, is MoMA's continuing refusal to look at Matisse's achievement in the 1920s and 1930s. For years, the contention was that the museum did not have the right works

I am also depressed by the museum's insistent downplaying of Braque. This continues in spite of one of the wisest acquisitions of recent years, Braque's stupendous *Studio V* (1949–1950), which has been sandwiched between dreary works by Dubuffet and Bacon. Years ago, at the time that Rubin mounted the great show "Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism," Clement Greenberg observed that the title ought to have been alphabetical—that Braque deserved his due; but here is Braque, for some people a greater painter than Picasso, placed in the same shadowy—and maybe even shadowier—relationship with Picasso.

Some of the choices in the permanent collection—I refer to the showcasing of a group of middling South American artists—suggest a rather obvious and per-

in some instances to the worst excesses of the funhouse museums of our own time. The Modern now exists in an element that Barr and his colleagues created. The treasures of the Modern are no longer, if you will, the definitive modern masterpieces, but masterpieces pure and simple. They are no longer connected to the intensity, the feverishness that a generation ago ran through the museum like an electric current.

Older museumgoers, those who began going in the 1940s or 1950s or 1960s, will feel the difference. There was something that gripped you when you walked into the Modern: a sense of alarm, almost of panic, at how much was at stake. The old Modern had a vision not only of what you ought to see but also of what you ought to feel, and how you ought to live your life. And the insouciance, the high spirits, the New York chic that were all a part of the museum's mystique were related to that electric current, and that was an entirely different thing from the fast-track act that the museum has more and more purveyed in the past quarter-century. This fall the old electricity is gone, and there is not enough of the dignity that needs to grow up in its place—a dignity that honors what was, and acknowledges what now can and cannot be.

III.

YOSHIO TANIGUCHI, THE JAPANESE architect who won the competition for the rebuilding of the Modern in 1997 after an international talent search, is very much the hero of the moment. His work in New York—the culmination of years spent designing museums in Japan, which are the subject of the one major temporary show at MoMA right now—reflects a steadiness of purpose and an innovative traditionalism that points the Modern in the right direction. Taniguchi is the first architect in recent times to produce a large, multi-purpose museum that really works. He has finessed the problem of working with an already existing structure that gave I.M. Pei such trouble at the National Gallery and the Louvre, and that capsized Herzog and de Meuron at Tate Modern. Taniguchi has created the kind of overarching unity that eluded Richard Meier at the Getty. (MoMA in some respects resembles that institution, with its varied functions as a center for scholarship, education, and art.) Working

with the patchwork of spaces that the Modern has acquired on the block bordered by Fifth and Sixth Avenues and West 53rd and West 54th Streets, Taniguchi has given a new shine to the best of the old Modern—the Sculpture Garden, the façade of the 1939 International Style building on West 53rd Street—while creating a whole that is entirely his own.

Architecture is always a matter of relating the parts to the whole, and it is imperative that the elements that we experience close up be linked, in some essential way, to the sense of the building as an enveloping experience. The big museums by Pei, Meier, and Herzog and de Meuron can leave you feeling like an ant in a maze. Taniguchi's Modern has its towering spaces and its long vistas, but they do not leave you feeling puny or irrelevant. This architect knows how to humanize the chill that is often associated with modern buildings; his sensitivity recalls the work that Gordon Bunshaft did at Lever House in the 1950s. The secret at MoMA, I think, is that Taniguchi makes us feel that the space originates with us. He does this through the aptness and the refinement of the details that we experience up close, and unlike Meier, who at the Getty was unable to give those bits of exquisite architectural tailoring some larger dimension, Taniguchi uses them as leitmotifs that expand into grand themes.

Taniguchi's Modern is crisp, cool, sleek—but also quirky and soothing and inviting. The feeling for space—the overhanging rooflines and smaller boxlike structures tucked in larger boxlike structures—suggests invitations piled upon invitations. And all this high modern fanfare is no tease, for the Modern has the kind of collections that give Taniguchi's purist drama its strong internal engine. Visitors can now enter the museum not only from West 53rd Street but also from West 54th Street, and the long corridor that links the two streets and functions as a public space has a relatively low ceiling, one that echoes the proportions of street-level shops, and makes our first steps inside the museum an extension of the life of the city, which is altogether appropriate for this museum that has always been knit so deeply into the urban fabric. Turning to go into the museum—this is where you give your ticket—the space heightens and suddenly we see before us the Sculpture Garden, that island in the city, and to our right an elegant staircase that is altogether new but that echoes and in-

deed invokes the legendary staircase that was sidelined in the building program of a quarter-century ago.

TANIGUCHI'S WORK NEVER UPSTAGES the art. Indeed, in your first moments in the museum what may mostly strike you are your glimpses of the collection: an Ellsworth Kelly painting over the information counter, Miró's *Mural* opposite the stairs, Rodin's *Balzac* set against the Sculpture Garden rather than in it as it had been in the past. Going up the stairs, you are in the five-story-high atrium, a space that is grand but somehow not overwhelming, and that is the perfect frame for Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk*, a sculpture that has never looked this good before. Beyond the Newman hangs the three-panel Monet *Water Lilies*. And, looking up, you can glimpse, through a window looking into the Painting and Sculpture galleries, Matisse's *Dance*. Taniguchi has a feeling for modern luxe, in the attenuated steel elements that define floors and frame windows. His rhythmic sense is superb, whether in the bit of open space that separates the panels of a glass parapet, or in the articulation of the walls that face the garden. In the galleries, Taniguchi has kept his interventions to a minimum. He has wisely preserved the old MoMA tradition of including a few windows that frame New York City streetscapes and skylscapes. And he has lined the doorways between the galleries in sleek metal that gives just the right touch of glamour—it's an architectural exclamation point. A resplendent staircase linking the fourth- and fifth-floor galleries floats in the air, a geometric fantasy come to life. Taniguchi brings a spare athleticism to the Museum of Modern Art.

Given the seeming effortlessness of Taniguchi's achievement, we need to remind ourselves of how daunting his assignment was. The museum has been acquiring real estate on West 53rd Street for most of its history, and there was never a master plan, at least not for very long. The museum's first major construction project, the building designed by Philip L. Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone that opened in 1939, was one of the earlier International Style structures in the city, and its façade, complete with curved canopy, has been exquisitely restored. Philip Johnson's additions, with dark metal framing sheets of glass, are less admired now than they ought to be, and

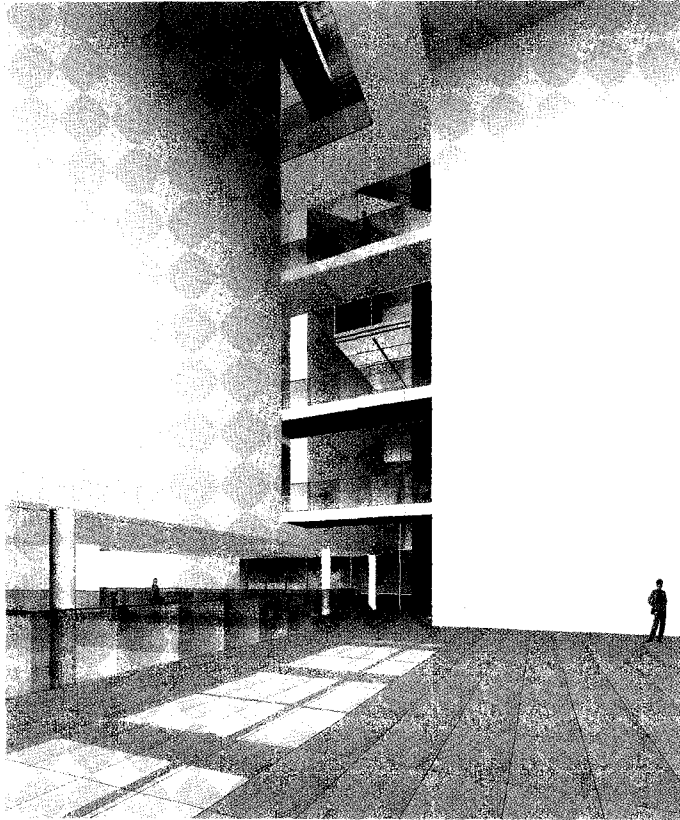
some of Johnson's work, too, has been preserved. The museum's last major renovation, designed by Cesar Pelli and completed twenty years ago, involved construction of an apartment tower, which is an important source of income for the museum, and Taniguchi has had to work around that tower as he moved the museum's center of gravity westward, toward the site of the Dorset Hotel on 54th Street, the purchase and demolition of which essentially made this project possible. Taniguchi's canniness rests in his decision at once to accept the sense of discrete volumes and voids that was bequeathed to him and to unite them through his strong constructivist feeling, a feeling for form that he underscores through the graphic articulation of two-dimensional surfaces. Instead of masking the Pelli tower—the bottom floors of which are in fact part of the museum—Taniguchi has made us aware of this tower as a volume that originates in the Sculpture Garden and that the museum wraps around. On 53rd Street, where the old façades have been preserved, we have a glimpse of the museum's history. From 54th Street, every surface is Taniguchi's, except that the Sculpture Garden was designed by Philip Johnson, so again there is a balancing, a negotiation.

The incorporation of disjunctive elements is by now a cliché of architectural renovations, and of the postmodern spirit in general, but for Taniguchi, who is at heart a classicist, there must be a resolution. He obviously has a taste for variety, and it seems to grow out of a liberal sense of the play of possibilities rather than a hunger for the eccentric gesture. Perhaps the secret is that he does not regard the various layers of the building as historical artifacts. The Sculpture Garden, designed in the early 1950s, is not an example of retrochic that he offers with a wink, but a triumph of urban planning that he feels as a pressure on the work that he is doing here. Taniguchi thinks dialectically, rather than confrontationally. He works

his way into the givens of the situation and acts through them, and the effect is a kind of architecture that exerts a gentle pressure. You may not notice how much he has done. That is his triumph.

IV.

THE DECISION TO PUT THE DESIGN of the museum in the hands of Yoshio Taniguchi is at once the most conservative choice and the most radical choice that the Museum of Modern Art has made in



The Museum of Modern Art, second floor atrium, November 2004

recent years. When I walk through the museum, I am quite sure that Taniguchi's articulation of space and sense of color and feeling for detail are very close to those of the terrific architects who preceded him, Goodwin and Stone and Johnson; and although this is to some degree an illusion, it is the illusion that the museum quite rightly wants to create. This architect who has never before worked outside of Japan has understood the Museum of Modern Art better than the hometown team.

It is in everything except the new architecture—in the selection of works on display and in the hanging of the

collections—that I feel a disquietude about the pressures of the past, a disquietude that expresses itself through a mixture of begrudging conventionality and dutiful contemporaneity that seems mostly designed to throw sops to the various constituencies that the museum wants to keep happy. There may be a tendency to blame the museum's opportunistic tendencies on Glenn Lowry, who in the nearly ten years that he has been director has transformed MoMA from a museum where the curator was king to a more conventionally structured institution. But the uniquely close relationships that some of MoMA's curatorial visionaries once had with some of the trustees may have died a natural death, a victim of a more general regularization of giving in the arts.

Reading the movements of an institution as large, as complex, and as byzantine as the Modern is not an easy task. And students of the history of the Museum of Modern Art—New York is full of them—will want to remind us that the Modern's sense of self was always changing, and was often quite mercurial. Although the museum acquired works of art from the very beginning, the intention in the early decades was to have a shifting collection and to de-accession works when they reached a certain age. It was only in 1953, when the museum realized what a priceless hoard it had, that the permanent collection as an enduring fact was enshrined. And if the very idea of a permanent collection was one that has had a fluid career at the Modern, the Modern's relation to the achievements of the present—to contemporary painting and sculpture, not to mention to new architecture and design and photography and film—has also been extraordinarily vexed. There has not been a time when New York's artists didn't believe that the Modern underrated their importance, or overlooked them entirely, or when one group of artists didn't believe that the Modern was paying too much attention to another group of artists.

And Barr, in several eloquent statements, was candid about the museum's limitations as a predictor of trends, although that never stopped him from trying to play that most dangerous game.

When Barr is invoked at MoMA today, it is often as the hyper-energetic director of the earliest decades, as the prophet of experimentation, of the new. Barr had first envisioned his museum as a laboratory devoted to aesthetic investigations, with departments dedicated to everything from industrial design to photography and film, and he had wanted it to be dynamic, energetic, provisional. By the 1960s, however, Barr saw that his work had helped to jump-start an entire art world, and he seems to have begun to feel that what the Modern could do best was supply solidity, continuity—with its peerless collections as an anchor and a beacon. The aspect of Barr's legacy that the Modern would be wisest to study now is the legacy of his later years, when without ever turning his back on the whirl of the present he came to feel that his most essential work would be on the permanent collection, which he lovingly catalogued, and which he then left in the hands of William Rubin, who immeasurably enriched its holdings (while also going off on some fairly dubious contemporary tangents).

There are many reasons why the powers that be at the Modern are reluctant to accept the proposition that the museum's most useful role is now a custodial role, but there really aren't any good ones. The fact is that nobody any longer looks to the Modern for guidance on contemporary art. The art world presents nearly endless opportunities to see the latest thing—in galleries and at the increasingly influential art fairs and the biennials and the other international exhibitions that mean so much to dealers, to collectors, and to the curators who watch the money trail. Robert Storr, the curator who left the Modern a few years ago, has been making news in some of those flash-point locales, organizing "Disparities and Deformations," which is currently at SITE Santa Fe, and taking on the directorship at the Venice Biennale, where he will be in charge in 2007.

On its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Museum of Modern Art needs to begin to grapple with the challenges that come with maturity. MoMA needs to face the fact that the only experiment that's still worth pursuing involves figuring out how to properly honor the treasure house that

the permanent collection has become. The brightest events at the Modern in recent years have been shows that reaffirmed the museum's traditional interests, such as the display of Russian avant-garde books in 2002 and the fine exhibition "Tall Buildings" at MoMA Queens over the summer, which reminded us of the voice that the museum used to have in urban matters. I am heartened to learn that among the museum's upcoming events are exhibitions focusing on the relationship between Pissarro and Cézanne, Redon's works on paper, and Seurat's drawings. These are exhibitions that promise to take us back to the chronological beginnings of the museum, even as they illuminate the beginnings of modern art.

The hardest beginning that lies before the Modern involves beginning to

accept the fact that a museum that was once a laboratory is now a monument. With his subtle re-imagining of the Museum of Modern Art, Yoshio Taniguchi has shown us what the monument can look like, but his makeover has also given a new lease on life to the museum's by-now-inveterate status as an aging hipster with some life left in it yet. Of course, New Yorkers love nothing more than an adorable aging hipster—especially when the hipster has just pulled off a makeover as fabulous as this one. But how many more makeovers can there be? And how many more snorts of art-world cocaine before the trips to rehab in Queens do not work anymore? There comes a time when you have to accept reality and finally grow up, and in this regard the Museum of Modern Art still has a long way to go. ■

Martin Malia

The Archives of Evil

Soviet studies after the Soviet Union.

I.

NOW THAT SOVIET COMMUNISM is at last "history," what do we understand about its workings that we failed to grasp when it seemed a permanent fixture of modernity? After all, the CIA notoriously overestimated its economic strength (some two-thirds of the American economy), thereby playing to our fears; and academic Sovietology exaggerated its potential for reform, thereby fostering the wishful hopes that culminated in late 1980s Gorbomania. So what deeper insights have emerged from more than a decade of digging in now largely open Soviet archives? Has there been an "archival revolution," as many enthusiastic researchers claim?

A consensus seems to have formed in Soviet studies that the politicized debates of the years before 1991 are now meaningless relics, because the "truth" became available only with our recent documentary windfall—as read, of course, in an austere factual and neutral manner. Be that as it may, of one thing we may be sure: the Soviet archives have confirmed in abundant detail our most somber pre-

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: CLASS, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SALVATION IN REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA
By Igal Halfin
(University of Pittsburgh Press, 474 pp., \$22.95)

TERROR IN MY SOUL: COMMUNIST AUTOBIOGRAPHIES ON TRIAL
By Igal Halfin
(Harvard University Press, 344 pp., \$45)

THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPIRE: NATIONS AND NATIONALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1923–1939
By Terry Martin
(Cornell University Press, 496 pp., \$27.50)

MAKING SENSE OF WAR: THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE FATE OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION
By Amir Weiner
(Princeton University Press, 416 pp., \$24.95)

1991 assessments of the Soviet record. So taking that grim verdict as a given, what is our present understanding of the one-time Soviet "enigma"?

Recall what a strange affair Soviet studies was before 1991. Whereas most national histories are written primarily by natives of the countries concerned, serious scholarly work on Soviet Russia, after being launched by such émigrés as the classical liberal Leonard Shapiro and the former Menshevik David Dallin, was thereafter the work of foreigners. Indeed, most of these were Americans, if not always by birth then by education and nationality. Since these outsiders hailed from a world in permanent confrontation with the object of their study, assessing the Soviet "experiment" became the most passionate public issue of the age, for supporters of Western policy and for its critics alike.

THE GREATEST OBSTACLE TO our understanding, of course, was that before 1991 we did not know how the Soviet story would turn out; and Hegel was surely right about the importance of closure to historical understanding when he declared that Minerva's owl takes flight only as night falls. Before 1991, writing Soviet history was thus a game of guessing the "experiment's" third act by giving different readings of the first two acts, the answer to the riddle of course hanging on whether Stalin was an "aberration" or the "fulfillment" of Lenin's heritage.

Interpretations of the Soviet riddle in American scholarship before the fall may be conveniently sorted out according to Turgenev's classic dichotomy of fathers and sons. In the immediate post-war decades, the "fathers" unhesitatingly accepted Stalin as Lenin's true heir; and they were equally certain that the pair's joint handiwork was a "totalitarianism" founded on the coercive action of the state and dedicated to ceaseless international expansion. Merle Fainsod of Harvard was the founding father of this school, and his book *How Russia Is Ruled*, which appeared in 1953, became the canonical text. After the 1960s, their

more radical sons—and daughters—for the most part argued in favor of discontinuity between Lenin and Stalin, and hence for a real possibility of reform. Regarding the post-Stalin period, they asserted that burgeoning "interest groups"—technocrats, scientists, managers—constituted an "institutional pluralism" that made the Soviet Union virtually a new country. Jerry Hough, who had been Fainsod's star pupil, became the leading "revisionist" by rewriting his mentor's book in 1979 under the title *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*. Methodologically, the "totalitarians" emphasized the primacy of party power acting "from above" in molding Soviet society, while the "revisionists" found the revolution's driving force in social and economic forces, as articulated by the people acting "from below."

For both camps, Marxist ideology was secondary. What was primary in communism, the two agreed, was modernization and "overcoming backwardness," as W. W. Rostow's *Stages of Economic Growth* confidently assured us in 1960. Unsurprisingly, there was a political subtext to this generational division: the fathers were unabashedly anti-communist, while the sons were by and large anti-anti-communist, the two groups differing correspondingly in assessing Western policy in the Cold War. In consequence, the sons denounced the totalitarian model as blatantly "political," while portraying their own contributions as rigorously professional—as if a "value-free" approach to communism's revolutionary pretensions were humanly possible.

Well, we now know that the Soviet story ended badly, and our historical challenge is to account for an actual failure rather than a potential success. Many of the fathers and all of the children are still active, and both have now submitted their cases to the judgment of the archives. As a result, the former have fleshed out their earlier briefs and the latter have had to backtrack on theirs—though without ever explaining why any such change was necessary, while a few even remind us of the experiment's "noble ideals." This generational difference is apparent even in Yale University Press's prestigious *Annals of Communism* series, which publishes selected archival documents interspersed with editorial commentaries: the volume on Lenin, edited by Richard Pipes, reads like an indictment, and the volume on the purges, edited by J. Arch Getty, visi-

bly strains to make the Terror look somewhat less terrible. Even the tribunal of the archives, apparently, does not necessarily produce a unanimous verdict.

II.

AND WHAT OF THE GENERATION that has come of age since 1991, and whose members sometimes call themselves "the grandsons"? Distance in time from the Soviet experiment clearly gives them a great advantage over their predecessors. Even so, they cannot avoid a question that is intrinsic to the experiment's very nature as a revolutionary enterprise: the pre-1991 methodological issue of the relative weight to be assigned to politics and ideology on the one hand, and to socioeconomic forces on the other. Ideally, of course, the two factors should constitute the warp and woof of any comprehensive historical explanation. For the moment, however, the revisionists' overemphasis on the social has produced the understandable reaction of a return to politics and culture.

This change is not without irony; for the revisionists embraced the primacy of socioeconomic forces in the 1970s and 1980s just as their reductionist dangers were becoming clear in the study of Western revolutions. Historians of the Bolshevik revolution are therefore only now starting to catch up with the efforts, a full generation earlier, of François Furet to take the French Revolution back from the Marxists, and of Bernard Bailyn to substitute an ideological reading of the American Revolution for the economic interpretation of the Progressive School of Charles Beard and company.

The shift in scholarly understanding of Soviet history first became apparent in 1995 with the publication of *Magnetic Mountain* by Stephen Kotkin, a close study of how Stalin actually "built socialism" in the 1930s in the new steel city of Magnitogorsk. In this pathbreaking work, state and people, "above" and "below," are brought together in a single "Soviet civilization." Kotkin's synthesis is this: since Stalin's Five-Year Plans made the party's ideological discourse ubiquitous and unavoidable, the mass of peasants-turned-workers inevitably came to "speak Bolshevik" as their very own language, and the result was a bizarre but nonetheless functioning civilization. The new proletarians genuinely identified with "building socialism" and took pride

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in their assigned roles as “shock workers”; but at the same time, in order to survive socialist penury, they felt it legitimate to occasionally “borrow” their factory’s tools to work for private gain.

Indeed, the omnipresence of ideology in Soviet life is the one genuine revelation of the Soviet archives. For it is now clear that Soviet officials, behind closed doors, and from the Politburo down to the local *ispolkom*, invariably “spoke Bolshevik” among themselves. Soviet leaders were not cynics, as many Western observers have imagined, but authentic true believers. And this included the man at the top, as we can now see from such sources as Yale University Press’s excellent editions of Stalin’s correspondence with Molotov and Kaganovich.

A SELECTION OF FIRST BOOKS by younger scholars may permit us to gauge how the re-evaluation of the Soviet adventure is proceeding. In *From Darkness to Light and Terror in My Soul* (in reality two parts of a single study), Igal Halfin undertakes the difficult task of defending the primacy of Marxist ideology in molding the Soviet system. He begins with a critique of social-history revisionism as exemplified by its doyenne Sheila Fitzpatrick. Her basic research on worker advancement under Stalin (somewhat abusively Americanized as “social mobility”) led her eventually to investigate a Bolshevik policy that rather baffled her: namely, the party’s relentless effort to foist Marxism’s urban social categories onto peasant Russia, a practice that in fact meant “inventing” classes that were not there. Yet Fitzpatrick never asked the real question that this policy posed, which is why the party so desperately needed those bogus classes. The great case in point, of course, is the supposititious existence of a kulak “petty bourgeoisie” and a poor-peasant (*bedniak*) “proletariat” in the Russian village.

Halfin’s answer to this conundrum is that the alleged social actors in the Soviet story—bourgeoisie, proletariat, intelligentsia—are not objectively given classes but moral figures in a salvation drama leading to an End of History. Real groupings in society have fuzzy boundaries and ambiguous profiles (“bourgeois intelligentsia,” for example). But Marxism, since it seeks less to understand the world than to change it, reduces this complexity to a stark polarity of proletariat and bourgeoisie, which is simultaneously

a moral antithesis of good and evil. The result is an eschatological vision of history as humanity’s ascent from the “darkness” of servitude under class society to its luminous “emancipation” in classless society. It is only in this context that Stalin’s steel mills and collective farms acquire their deeper socialist significance as means for creating a New World and a New Man.

The thesis that Marxism constitutes a secular religion is hardly new. It has been magisterially formulated by Raymond Aron, Leszek Kolakowski, and (with direct reference to Soviet policy) Andrzej Walicki, among others. But historians have largely resisted it, and Sovietologists have simply ignored it. The “totalitarians” treated Marxism as camouflage for the pursuit of power for its own sake or as an avatar of traditional Russian autocracy, and the “revisionists,” though in fact honoring ideology with E.P. Thompson-style studies in Russian labor history that gave the Soviet order a proper social base, were nonetheless uninterested in examining ideology’s role in the functioning of the regime. Yet if any work cries out for an ideological reading, it is the world built by Bolshevism. It should be completely obvious that in October 1917 it was not the Russian working class but a political faction of ideologues that seized power. Without their millenarian intoxication, the Soviet regime could hardly have achieved the prodigies of social transformation and mass violence to which it immediately proceeded.

HALFIN’S PURPOSE IS TO BRING out into the open the parareligious premises that made all this possible. His first step is a study in intellectual history, exploring the parallels between Soviet Marxism and Christian eschatology as these appear in major Bolshevik texts. From 1900 onward, figures such as Lenin’s longtime chief aide Aleksandr Bogdanov, the proponent of socialism as “God-building,” consistently envisaged Russia’s impending revolution as a millennial transformation in which the intelligentsia would lead the “dark” masses to the Marxist “light,” themes tirelessly reiterated in Bolshevik propaganda down to Minister of Education Anatolii Lunacharskii in the 1920s. This evidence, of course, does not constitute a case for the direct derivation of Marxism from religion. But it does establish that the

structural similarities between Marxism’s historical determinism and Christian eschatology can produce millenarian expectations and dogmatic convictions as readily in the socialist militant as in the religious enthusiast.

All this is quite credible, but it is difficult to render in rigorously empirical terms. So Halfin falls back on reiteration, which not infrequently leads to redundancies and convoluted argumentation. Halfin’s reader is often obliged to work too hard. Still, the effort is worth it in the end; and the payoff is a probing analysis of a unique culture in which party-speak itself has become a social force as potent as any material agent. In this new culture, Marxism is no mere social theory; it is a drama of redemption in which the proletariat is the redeemer class, a role that it earned by being the most suffering class in society. Yet this redeemer is at first not conscious of its mission: the workers must be illumined from without by special prophets, who comprise the socialist intelligentsia. (After prophets and masses together have made the revolution, under the resulting egalitarian conditions the workers are expected to become their own intelligentsia.)

IN FACT, HOWEVER, ONCE THE Bolsheviks had seized power, the tension between the two messiahs of their theory began to emerge. Halfin therefore turns from intellectual history to a valuable new archival source: the autobiographies that party members were periodically obliged to write. The purpose of these professions of faith (similar to the conversion testimonies of re-born Christians) was to give proof of a level of political commitment sufficient for party membership, or later, in the ritual of “self-criticism,” to show repentance for lapses from “correct” party positions. Using these autobiographies, Halfin sketches the evolution of the ideal communist “self,” or “soul,” from 1917 to 1937.

The October Revolution of 1917 had marked the world-historical breakthrough to the End of History. But since the immediate result could not offer the property-less, classless, and stateless millennium of full communism, Bolshevik eschatology contained provisions for temporary setbacks. The first of these arrived in 1921 with the New Economic Policy, or NEP, providing for a limited market economy. Coming after the heady years of the Civil War and War

“One Land for Two Peoples”

Is it a solution to the Arab/Israeli conflict or a recipe for disaster?

For decades, the declared thrust of the Palestinians has been their desire of having their own state – in Judea/Samaria (the “West Bank”) and in the Gaza Strip. Now, a new idea has taken hold and is propagated in national media: a binational state, encompassing those territories and “Israel proper.” The slogan is “One Land for Two Peoples.”

What are the facts?

Review of history: The Arabs have launched four major wars against Israel, at the end of which Israel remained in possession of all the lands west of the Jordan River, the undivided city of Jerusalem, the vast Sinai, the Golan Heights and the Gaza Strip. In what was in all likelihood a major act of folly, but in order to attain peace with Egypt, Israel returned the Sinai to Egypt. But the peace with Egypt is the coldest imaginable.

Thus, having been unable to defeat Israel in war and unable to wear it down by their “intifadas,” the Arabs had to think up something new in order to destroy Israel. And they did indeed come up with something. According to Yasser Arafat, the most important weapon of the Arabs is the “Arab womb,” the motto being: “If we can’t defeat them in war, let’s outbreed them.” And that is exactly what would happen if there ever were a “binational” state. There can be little doubt that, within a generation or less, the Arabs would have outbred their Jewish fellow citizens and would have become the majority in the country. They would thus have accomplished what they were unable to attain by any other means, namely the destruction of the Jewish state.

Artificial countries: With the exception of Egypt, all the countries of the Middle East are artificial creations. After World War I, England and France carved up the Ottoman Empire, with England retaining what are now Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Iraq, and France being in possession of what are now Syria and Lebanon.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration, proclaimed by the British mandatory power, established all of Palestine – east and west of the Jordan River – as the reconstituted homeland for the Jewish people. This was ratified by the 52 countries of the League of Nations. Insistence that these are Arab lands and that

the Jews are “occupiers” is a notion that has been repeated so often and for so long that most of the world has come to believe it. But it has no basis in fact at all. It is a myth.

If Israel were ever to consent to the creation of a binational state, how would it work out? To get the answer, one only needs to go next door to Lebanon. In order to provide a safe haven for the Maronite Christians, the French carved out the artificial state of Lebanon. Within just one generation, the population ratio had begun to change in favor of the Moslems. Strife broke out, which ultimately culminated in a bloody civil war that lasted for close to ten years and in which

scores of thousands died. Can anybody really believe that, given the mortal hatred of the Moslems against the Jews, things would be any different in Israel/Palestine? Of course not! A bloody civil war would be the inevitable result.

Created as a Jewish state: Israel was created as a Jewish state by the will of the nations of the world and by the brain and brawn of the Jewish people. There is no reason why the Israelis would turn their country over to those who are their declared mortal enemies. Do the Turks plan to establish a binational state with the Kurds (or do the Iranians or Iraqis, for that matter)? Do the Spaniards consider a binational state with the Basques? Do the Chinese propose the formation of a binational state with the Tibetans? Of course not. Why, therefore, should Israel even consider sharing its country with those whose never-changing agenda is its destruction? Why should Israel, one of the most advanced countries in the world in virtually every field of endeavor, make itself hostage to those who live in backwardness and ignorance and who are guided by religious fanaticism? Israel was founded to be the Jewish homeland and it will never acquiesce to its own destruction by allowing itself to become a binational state.

“The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance...”

A binational state is a non-starter and, realistically, a Palestinian state in any portion of Judea/Samaria and Gaza (even in the unlikely case that the Israelis were ever willing to concede it) would not be viable. What then is the possible solution to this enduring problem? The Palestinians, just as the over one million Arabs now living in Israel with full rights as citizens, could be part of Israel, with full autonomy and with their own internal governance (something that the Kurds would give anything to attain). If they were unhappy with that solution they would be at liberty to migrate to any of the over twenty Arab countries that, one would hope, would welcome them with open arms.

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Communism, this partial retreat to "capitalism" was a clear defeat for the party. For the foreseeable future, then, embattled Soviet socialism would exist in an intermediate world between the redemptive promise of October and its eventual realization in full, a world of "already" but "not yet" familiar in Christian eschatology.

In this ambiguous interlude, the relationship between the two communist messiahs could only be a ceaseless conflict between proletarian good and bourgeois evil. For only part of the intelligentsia was socialist and good. Most of it was "bourgeois" and bad, and this very component was entrenched in the universities inherited from the old regime. And just as in the larger society the party needed such "bourgeois specialists" as managers and engineers to make NEP work, in the universities it needed the old intelligentsia to train their worker successors. To get through the painful eschatological interim, therefore, the party saturated the university curriculum with the language of class (as it did with the larger society), and added "workers' faculties," or adult educational courses, to existing academic units.

THIS SOLUTION LED TO CONFLICT, called "class struggle," between the worker faculties and traditional academia. Moreover, there were too few semi-qualified workers to maintain the universities' proletarian component at a properly socialist level, while too many qualified "former people" (as nobles and children of priests were now called) sought higher education. Hence both groups took to editing their biographies to fit the regime's ideological categories. Since this inevitably brought pseudo-proletarians into the university, the workers' faculties demanded a "purge," meaning expulsion from the party or from school. By the mid-1920s, in the university system, and indeed in all sensitive Soviet institutions, ideological "purity" came to take precedence over practical professional needs, and "pollution" from "class-alien" infiltrators became the supreme counter-revolutionary danger.

This process was carried a step further at the end of the decade, when first the Left Opposition and then the Right Opposition was condemned and their leaders expelled from the party. For the first time, the enemies of socialism were not just class-alien interlopers, but real

proletarians and long-standing Bolshevik chiefs. In the early 1930s, opposition came to be viewed as a kind of illness or degeneration within the working class. Still, if these "degenerates" recanted, they might yet be saved for the cause. The arch-oppositionists Zinoviev and Kamenev were re-admitted to the party as late as 1932.

With the crash industrialization and the forced collectivization of the First Five-Year Plan, the Soviet experiment's place on the eschatological timeline changed radically. In 1936, the "Stalin Constitution" certified that socialism had been essentially "built." All exploiting classes were now declared to be extinct, leaving only the "non-antagonistic" categories of workers, kolkhoz peasants, and intelligentsia, groups that taken together constituted the "people." In this perfected New World, the New Man, too, must surely have appeared.

New deviations from party orthodoxy, therefore, could no longer be explained as "class-alien" behavior or a temporary lapse from party norms. All deviations were now inherently anti-party and actively counter-revolutionary. In consequence, the persons involved represented ineradicable evil, ontological evil. They were persons too vile for mere expulsion from the party, and fit only for judgment by the criminal courts. Accordingly, the Constitution of 1936 created the catchall category of "enemies of the people," for whom the automatic penalty was death. In the next two years the former oppositions were fused into a single Trotskyite-Zinovievite-Bukharinite counter-revolutionary bloc allied with fascism to restore capitalism. All the chief figures were duly executed.

This escalating ideological delirium matched every step of the 1930s revolution from above. In 1929, when Stalin launched his "great offensive" against the "petty bourgeois kulaks," he justified the mass coercion required with the novel (and for some, paradoxical) theory that the closer society approached socialism, the more intense the class struggle became. In consequence, once socialism's advent had been officially proclaimed in mid-decade, all critical, or even doubting, elements in society could only be innate "enemies," perverse "wreckers," concealing their machinations behind a display of party zeal. How else was it possible to explain the very real shortages, breakdowns, and crises still racking the perfect new Soviet world? In 1937, when Stalin

set out to "unmask" all enemies in the Great Terror of that year, he proclaimed the ultimate refinement of the principle of class struggle: "the most dangerous enemy is the man with a party card in his pocket."

III.

TERRY MARTIN'S *Affirmative Action Empire* reads as though it were written about a different country. It treats an important subject, indeed one that many would consider the central matter of the Soviet story: the Soviet Union as a "multinational empire." And communism's finale of 1991 is in fact now commonly called the "collapse of the Soviet Union," while for relevant historical comparisons we are referred to those other multinational states, the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. But when did that pair ever build socialism? All its ethnic diversity notwithstanding, surely the most important fact about the Soviet empire was that it was a Communist Party empire.

That said, the treatment accorded its non-Russian minorities remains a significant matter. Martin approaches the subject not by examining the nationalities themselves, but by tracing the development of Soviet policy toward them. The result is a straightforward political—or more exactly, administrative—history of that policy between 1923 and 1939. Its five hundred chronologically organized pages offer as densely factual a narrative as one could desire. Indeed, the book is a kind of Exhibit A of what the "archival revolution" stands for; and it is for this archival strength that Martin's work has been lavishly praised. Yet it should be noted that his book does not offer any larger analysis or overall thesis; and the story ends abruptly in 1939 without a word of conclusion. The tone is generally bland and neutral, in the current non-judgmental mode of Soviet studies. Apparently the archival facts are supposed to be self-interpreting.

The story runs as follows. In the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks re-organized the re-conquered Russian Empire as a federation of republics, named the Soviet Union, which, as Stalin later put it, were to be "national in form and socialist in content." This strategy was called *korenizatsiia*, or "indigenization," meaning that the minorities were to be made communist by rooting party values in their

indigenous cultures. Concretely, this entailed conceding to the constituent republics, as well as to thousands of lesser ethnic units within them, the cultural accoutrements of nationhood: use of the native language in instruction and administration, a national literature, folklore, even an opera—though not, of course, the supreme attribute of nationhood, political independence.

THE JOINT WORK OF LENIN and Stalin during 1923, this policy was adopted for a mixture of ideological and practical reasons. In the Marxist canon, nationalism belonged to the “bourgeois” stage of history and hence could have no place in the new Soviet state. Yet there were peoples within that state’s boundaries whose resistance to czarism had found expression in nationalism rather than in socialism. Indigenization was thus a means for easing these peoples through their dangerous nationalist phase while preserving Soviet unity for the coming socialist offensive. Indeed, this policy entailed some reverse discrimination against Russians, since their “chauvinism” under czarism had made the minorities leery of any government, no matter how progressive, installed in the Kremlin. What is more, the spectacle of Austria-Hungary’s dissolution in 1918 served as a potent warning to the Bolsheviks to treat their own minorities with caution.

In the Union’s more advanced western nations—Ukraine being the critical case—the Bolsheviks boldly promoted an enhanced, even preponderant, role in public life for the native cultures. In the backward eastern nations, by contrast, the Bolsheviks had to create literate ethnic identities from scratch, with internationalist Latin, not “chauvinist” Cyrillic, alphabets. All this worked more or less until the end of the decade, and even during the frenzy of collectivization in 1930–1932; literacy spread and local elites did in fact emerge. But eventually indigenization began to cause trouble for the regime, as resistance to collectivization greatly sharpened Ukrainian national sentiment just when Moscow’s new command economy required increased centralization. In 1932, for this reason, Stalin began to backtrack from his earlier radicalism toward the minority nations.

Although indigenization was never abandoned, it was seriously diluted as

Russian language and culture came to be emphasized as pan-Soviet unifiers. The Latin alphabets of minority languages were now changed to Cyrillic, and Pushkin became a kind of pan-Union national poet. At the end of the 1930s, Stalin went still further and enshrined as governing principle of the Soviet motherland the ideal of “Friendship of the Peoples,” with the Russians assigned the role of elder brother. This general picture is not new—the scholar Gerhard Simon gave a good outline of it in 1991—but Martin has fleshed it out more fully than any other before him. His book offers the best handbook of information on its subject that we will have for a long time to come.

BUT THE RHETORICAL PACKAGING of this information is quite a different matter. The problem begins with the cover of Martin’s book, which displays the smiling faces of Stalin and an Uzbek girl under the words “Affirmative Action Empire.” And the book’s opening sentence solemnly proclaims that “the Soviet Union was the world’s first Affirmative Action Empire.” (Are we supposed to hope for others?) These words then recur, always uppercase, like an incantation, on almost every other page. But “affirmative action” was never a Soviet term. As Martin himself recognizes, Lenin used the expression *polozhitel’naia deiatel’nost’*, or “positive action,” only once, in 1905—and with reference to “bourgeois nationalists”! Even so, Martin informs us that he found the “social mobility” fostered by indigenization so exceptional that it required a special name; so he appropriated an American ideal of civil rights and bestowed it on the imperium of Lenin and Stalin.

It is not a semantic quibble to object to this procedure. Particularity of time and of place is the essence of history as a discipline. The Soviet Union was not, to put it mildly, the United States, and the 1920s were not the 1970s, and reversing these identities simply denatures the past. Martin’s “Affirmative Action” mantra gives us an improbably humanitarian Soviet Union, an enterprise that unlike European colonial empires, say, was a progressive—indeed, a model—empire. With “Affirmative Action” as the “national constitution of the Soviet Union,” it constituted a “fascinating experiment in governing a multiethnic state,” to which there was “nothing com-

parable . . . with the possible exception of India.”

Martin’s title is simply the most extreme case of the book’s use of argument by verbal suggestion. There is also the pervasive use of social-science-speak to make distinctively Soviet practices look like neutral governing techniques. Thus we find “terror as a system of signaling,” meaning that “asymmetrical” state violence can be an effective political tool. Now this is certainly true as a practical matter, but the way Martin states it debolshevizes its context and its purposes. A similar effect can be produced by ordinary language. Thus Martin insists that the Bolsheviks’ hostility to the outside world must be called “Soviet xenophobia,” as if it were garden-variety nationalism, whereas in fact it derived from their view of foreign relations as “international class struggle.” Cumulatively, such procedures create a tone of bland neutrality that in fact blurs the otherness of Soviet society. In Martin’s “Affirmative Action” Empire, no one speaks Bolshevik anymore.

To be sure, Martin duly notes that Soviet “Affirmative Action” was not an end in itself but a preliminary to socialist modernization. True also, he distinguishes between “hard-line” and “soft-line” Soviet policies, the former being the core programs of collectivization and crash industrialization, and the latter such egalitarian adjuncts as nationalities policy. He also duly notes that when the two conflicted the soft line invariably had to give way, as in Ukraine in 1932. All the same, the reader receives the impression of a generally beneficent and at least partially successful enterprise.

In truth, indigenization was a basically naïve and misguided policy—and Martin’s own evidence indicts it as such. This is not to say that the Soviet state was eventually destroyed by minority nationalism, as is often alleged. The Soviet pseudo-Union collapsed when Gorbachev, in promoting perestroika, recklessly dismantled the party’s Central Committee; once that command center had been demolished, the governing *apparatchiki* of the various republics had a free hand to declare their satrapies independent “nations.” Indigenization’s failure, rather, was that it generated ethnic conflict during the empire’s lifetime; and when the end came, most of the successor states were not viable entities.

A major source of their weakness was what Martin calls “the hole in the

middle" that was left over from indigenization. In the Eastern republics especially, Soviet power had created an apparatchik elite above and powerless plebs below, but with no middle class or proto-civil society in between. In consequence, if we leave aside the only partially Sovietized Baltic states, we see that Belarus, Moldova, and what Stephen Kotkin called in these pages the "Trashcan-ists" of Central Asia are clearly disasters; even such genuinely "historic nations" as Armenia and Georgia are now a shambles; and Ukraine is still touch-and-go on the way to real nationhood. The only national unit that basically works is the one that had been least favored by indigenization, Russia, and such of its sub-units as Tatarstan—though not, of course, Chechnya. Clearly, the world's first Affirmative Action Empire has left no usable legacy to its successor states.

IV.

AMIR WEINER RETURNS US TO the real, unadulterated Soviet Union. In *Making Sense of War*, he indeed takes us into a new and little-known segment of its history, namely the country's wartime and postwar internal development. Until now, this subject has been ignored by Western historians primarily concerned with the more urgent matter of Soviet international behavior. Domestic developments, for their part, were dismissed with the summary judgment that after 1945 prewar Soviet structures were simply put back in place. Weiner's archivally based study of the Ukrainian province of Vinnytsia demonstrates that, on the contrary, the postwar restoration was in fact a new departure both for the province and the Union at large. Indeed, his central thesis is that the trauma of war and its aftermath amounted to a renewal of the revolution, a second founding of the Soviet enterprise.

In the twenty years before the war, whatever legitimacy Soviet communism could claim derived from its Civil War victory and Stalin's building of socialism. Yet these accomplishments had been visited by a minority on a largely hostile population, and the question remained whether the new regime could meet the military test that had destroyed its predecessor. That the Great Fatherland War of 1941–1945 answered this question positively is largely because it was a joint enterprise of party and peo-

ple. Victory therefore gave the regime a new and deeper legitimacy than ever before, as well as forty more years of life as a superpower.

This process of rebirth is particularly vivid in the border province of Vinnytsia. An area of some 2.3 million inhabitants before the war, it took twelve years after it to reach the same figure. In these difficult postwar years the provincial administration had not only to rebuild the socialist economy, but also to contend with the increasingly vexed matter of a mixed Ukrainian, Russian, and Jewish population. In short, Vinnytsia province offered a microcosm of the Soviet Union's most acute problems.

The war affected the province both in ways peculiar to it and in ways common to Soviet society as a whole. Nationally the regime treated the war as the great showdown between socialism and imperialism, a historically necessary "apocalypse" in which the Soviets' victory had consolidated their system for eternity. And this position was indeed shared by the true believers in Marxism-Leninism who dominated the party hierarchy at every level. To more sensitive believers, however, who were wracked by doubts about the cost of collectivization and the purges, the war was a "purgatory" that cleansed the communist utopia of its past crimes. To the more tepid mass of the population, the war meant defense of home and motherland, for Russians obviously but also for a majority of Ukrainians. Even for the masses, though, the war had consequences for their place in the official Soviet system.

BEFORE THE WAR, PROLETARIAN class origin was the most proper Soviet pedigree; after it, as Weiner shows, a record of valorous combat was an even better credential. Accordingly, many victims of the 1930s purges who had been released from the Gulag during the war to serve in the army after victory were reinstated in the party. Even more important, the new patriotic criterion of Soviet identity made Red Army membership the key to future advancement in the system. Conversely, the legacy of the war created new categories of "enemies."

Among these, of course, were genuinely "alien" elements, above all Ukrainian nationalists who had participated in local administration under the Germans, and whose guerrilla bands would fight on until the 1950s. Combating these forces

was a relatively simple matter, for most of the population turned against them either during or just after the wartime occupation. Far more dangerous, however, were enemies within the Soviet family. First to be confronted were the partisans; glorified during the conflict, they were now shouldered aside as "anarchic." Similarly suspect to the local population and to the higher party leadership were lower party cadres who had accepted duly authorized evacuation to the rear during the war. But most distrusted of all were party members who had remained in the province under German occupation. When the Red Army returned, in 1944, the regime's first priority was a massive, time-consuming "verification" of their behavior. Most were "cleansed" or purged from the party's ranks, even when their professional qualifications were urgently needed. The scope of this turnover of personnel was enlarged by the Soviet obsession with rooting out all "alien" social elements as potentially traitorous "pollution."

POSTWAR VINNYTSIA WAS THUS brought back into line by a less extreme application of the 1930s logic of terror and purge. Even though this time party discipline was largely bloodless, at least at the local level, by 1947 Vinnytsia, and indeed all Ukraine, had acquired a virtually new party, and its ranks were filled overwhelmingly with Red Army veterans. Mostly younger men, they would form the postwar Soviet elite almost until Gorbachev's perestroika. Tempered in battle, moreover, they were more assertive than the party recruits produced by the revolution from above of the 1930s; for example, in the postwar purges, such as the 1952 trial of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, the victims, unlike their prewar predecessors, for the most part refused to confess. Owing to this generational assertiveness, they later furnished a ready clientele for Khrushchev's "thaw." And since they were also largely from the peasantry, their ascendancy in the party did much to reconcile to Soviet power the great victim class of collectivization. Yet in Vinnytsia they were in addition largely Ukrainian, and so they felt a submerged Soviet Ukrainian patriotism that could be transferred to an independent state when the Union crumbled, just as Soviet Russian patriotism would triumph over party loyalty in Moscow.

Thus with the wartime victory the virus of nationalism for the first time entered officially into the ethos of the experiment.

This meant trouble for Ukraine's numerous Jews. Before the war they had generally prospered under Soviet power, but now they were excluded from the re-founded Soviet family. This change of attitude, moreover, owed something to the Nazi occupier, who had acquainted the population with new racial criteria of "purity" and "pollution." As applied to both Russians and Jews, these criteria appealed to long-standing Ukrainian prejudice, and increasingly also to a regime battling nationalist guerrillas. Both the regime and the population, therefore, began to "ethnicize" the already existing and well-honed Soviet concepts of "enemy," "pollution," and "purge." Whole groups, not just individuals, could now be "excised" from the polity in good Marxist conscience, though the regime insisted that its version of group purge had nothing to do with the "zoological" Nazi variety.

In this new perspective, the Jews as a diaspora nation were automatically suspect of harboring foreign loyalties. No matter how sterling their war record, no special status could be accorded them as victims of Nazism. Their sufferings existed only as part of Soviet suffering, and there was no place for the Holocaust in the iconography of the Great Fatherland War. The growing postwar ostracism of Soviet Jewry, moreover, was aggravated by new international tensions. American imperialism now replaced fascism as the great external menace to world socialism, and Zionism became its secret agent within the Soviet Union. Thus did both popular and official anti-Semitism reappear on the Soviet scene, reinforced by the ideology of revolutionary purity that had nurtured the Soviet system from the beginning.

THIS LOOK AT THE NEW SCHOLARLY literature on the Soviet Union, though limited, may provide a sense of the field's directions of change. We may give at least a provisional answer to the question with which we began: how much better do we understand the Soviet adventure today than we did before the liberating collapse

Allegory With Wasps

In late afternoon
three small girls go out looking
for nests. They find one

belonging to the paper-makers—
its tiered gray egg grafted
to rotting board on the neighbor porch.

If Beauty, hands joined in a circle.
If Luck, twice 'round with a hop.
From the low entrance, roar of mettle and wings.

Just as the blind woman feels boy or girl
through every stretched belly,
or the old man sees hundred-year flood

from his ninety-ninth summer,
this mother hears screaming,
knows some world is over,

and puts on her master face
behind the screen door: *blackberries for my hunters,*
tobacco-poultice for the sting.

ANNA ROSS

of 1991? The answer may be summarized in two points. The first is that the "archival revolution" has been over-rated. New information, no matter how valuable, is not the same as new insight. If the recent flood of documentation has been perceived as "revolutionary," this is owing to the exhilaration of discovery that accompanied it. But this excitement will pass, leaving us with the normal situation in any mature historical field: the archives are simply there, and the real problem is to derive meaning from their mute data. In order to hasten the arrival of such maturity in Soviet studies, a more critical attitude toward the current archival fetishism would certainly be welcome.

The second point is that, after the long dominance of social history, the time has naturally come for a turn (or a return) to ideology, and more broadly to cultural history. Such a methodological adjustment is all the more logical in light of the Soviet regime's overtly ideocratic nature. As we have seen, this scholarly transition is well under way, and with promising results. Even so, no field of scholarship can be turned around in a decade; and Soviet studies are still far from the level of achievement in

the most creative areas of contemporary historical writing, the study of Nazi Germany and the French Revolution—fields that are all the richer for having grown from national into international enterprises.

How can Soviet history make the leap to a comparable level of accomplishment? Not by an injection of new facts, but by an act of conceptual imagination, a fundamental rethinking of the Russian Revolution. (François Furet's *Penser la Révolution française* comes to mind.) This means recovering a clear awareness of what constitutes the Soviet phenomenon's historical particularity. For that phenomenon was not defined by such secondary features as "modernization" or "neo-autocracy," but by the ideological name it proudly gave itself—communism—as understood in its full millenarian and militant sense.

And let us not forget how incredible that phenomenon was. In briefest outline, the story is this. Profiting from the war-induced disintegration of society, a small band of ideologues took over the Russian Empire and amid its ruins, in less than twenty years, "built socialism" for the first time in history, a feat that mesmerized and polarized the planet, and whose impact was immeasurably reinforced by victory in World War II, a triumph that also made the Soviet Union a superpower. But the most amazing Soviet feat of all came forty years later, when this world-straddling colossus collapsed like a house of cards, in peacetime, and without any effort of defense by its elite.

This strange epic, no matter how we may evaluate it politically or morally, is surely *hors pair* in history. It will not be grasped by comparisons with Austro-Hungarian multi-nationalism or American social policy. It can only be approached with a strict mind, and in a spirit of wonder and awe at an enigma that will never really go away, the mystery of an impossible utopian ambition so firmly institutionalized in state power that it lasted fully three-quarters of a century. ■

CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Law and Disorder

THE PALESTINIANS COULDN'T hold an orderly, peaceful burial. So why does everyone think they can create an orderly, democratic state?

Well, not exactly everybody. At his joint press conference with Tony Blair last week, President Bush addressed the Palestinians, "If you choose not to be helped, if you decide you don't want a free, democratic society, there's nothing we can do." A bit impolitic, perhaps, and more than a bit disappointing to Blair, who wants to pacify a Labour left that is still incensed with his support for the Iraq war and was always infatuated with Palestinian terrorists. But Bush was uttering a crystalline truth.

THERE WAS VERY LITTLE TRUTH surrounding Yasir Arafat's death. In Cairo, where his formal, strictly controlled funeral was held, he was "mourned" mostly by people who hated him: Jordan's King Abdullah, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Syrian President Bashar Assad. Even Arafat's wife, Suha—ensconced first at the super-luxurious Bristol Hotel on the Faubourg St. Honore in Paris and later in some lavish lair in the sixteenth arrondissement with rent paid by the Palestinian Authority—hadn't seen him in more than three years. Arafat's chaotic, violent burial on the West Bank attracted more of his enemies, including most of the pretenders to his succession. They, too, shed crocodile tears. After all, he had humiliated each and every one.

YET, SOMEHOW, THE PALESTINIAN MASSES, and especially young men, felt uplifted by him. It is pathetic that a man who robbed his people blind and led them down the blind alley of terrorism against Israel just as it was making quite remarkable (and, I believe, actually reckless) concessions should attract such wild ardors. Hundreds of people were trampled (though none died) at the burial service, and at least nine others were wounded by the Palestinian security force. What is the politics of these young, masked, and angry men? Can they be enlisted in the politics of compromise? Their chants do not encour-

age much hope: "You are our beloved. Give us a Kalashnikov." "On to Jerusalem: A million martyrs." But the fact is that there were only some 20,000 mourners in Ramallah, a tiny number for a place where the funerals of lesser-known militants often draw similar numbers. And, among Israeli Arabs, a memorial march in Nazareth drew as few as 1,000. Quite shabby, really.

RECENT HISTORY IS REplete with examples of Arab and Palestinian paranoia. Remember the blood libel that the AIDS pandemic was a Zionist plot? That the World Trade Center bombing was the work of the Mossad, Israel's (more effective) CIA? So for days it was rumored on the Palestinian street that the Israelis had poisoned the old man in his quasi-isolation in Ramallah—him, but no one else in the Muqata. The chief of Hamas, Khaled Mashal, who resides in Damascus, also accused Israel of poisoning Arafat. Arafat's personal physician, however, proposed another theory. Dr. Ashraf Al Kurdi told *The Boston Globe's* Charles A. Radin that "Mr. Arafat went to the [Paris] hospital walking and left dead." So perhaps the French poisoned him.

BY HIS MOURNERS YOU SHALL KNOW him. The North Koreans declared three days of official mourning. And Robert Mugabe attended the cortege in Cairo. Kofi Annan was "deeply moved" by Arafat's passing, certainly more deeply moved than he was by the plight of the Bosnians, the Tutsis, and the million-plus Sudanese, victims of his stubborn indifference. As Arafat's body was about to leave Paris, Jacques Chirac uttered words that were very French, straining for the portentous and ending with the slightly absurd: "I have come to bow before President Yasir Arafat and pay him a final homage." The post-Madrid bombing Socialist government of Spain expressed its "great sadness." Why can't the Europeans—including even the Chechen-traumatized Russians and the newly traumatized Dutch—call Arafat what he was: Osama bin Laden's ideological mentor and the mentor of virtually all the world's prominent terrorists? In

my mind, it's rather simple: Arafat, from the 1972 Munich massacre through three decades of random murder of Israeli civilians, killed mostly Jews. And Jews are always guilty of something.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES FOR CHANGE in the Palestinian polity? The Israelis are doing what they can to strengthen moderates like Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen), the former prime minister of the Authority whom Arafat unceremoniously pushed out of power. Astute observers believe that Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala), the current premier, will support his bid to succeed Abu Ammar (Arafat's *nom de guerre*). Alas, these comparatively reasonable men—still, one did write a Holocaust-denying doctoral dissertation at the University of Moscow—are not especially popular among the populace. There are other Abus—some less disposed to compromise, some even more ferocious—waiting to see what will happen on the street.

WELL, SOMETHING DID HAPPEN, NOT exactly on the street, but in an official mourning tent for Arafat in Gaza. As Abbas entered the tent last Sunday, dozens of members of the Abu Ammar Brigade, an offshoot of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, started shouting, "No to Abu Mazen," "Abbas traitor," and "Abbas and [Mohammed] Dahlan [the former security minister] are agents for the Americans." Then they opened fire, killing at least two and wounding five others.

THERE WILL BE MORE OF THIS, AND soon. One thing is certain: The European obsession with a special envoy or a summit conference will do nothing to stop the sanguineous habits among the Palestinians. There are many killers, even among Arafat's immediate heirs, and Javier Solana lived quite well with them. In any case, killing was Arafat's way of life, and compromise was not his path to a free Palestine. That is his bitter legacy and the legacy many, perhaps most, of his survivors honor. For the religious zealots in Hamas and Islamic Jihad, who, in a way (but only in a way), were Arafat's rivals, the killing of Jews and of "disloyal" Arabs is a religious obligation, and anyone who seeks compromise with the Israelis is an infidel. These groups are hugely favored in emerging Palestine, especially by the young. There will be much more blood before there are productive peace parleys.

MARTIN PERETZ

The Plight of Immigrants from Mexico

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A Immigrants from Mexico do far worse when they migrate to the United States than do immigrants from other countries.

Those difficulties are more a reflection of U.S. immigration policy than they are of underlying cultural differences. The following facts from the 2000 U.S. Census reveal that Mexican immigrants do not move into mainstream American society as rapidly as do other immigrants.

1. Eighty percent of non-Mexican immigrants are fluent in English. Among Mexicans, the number is 49 percent.
2. Non-Mexican (working) immigrants have an average wage income of \$21,000 a year. Mexican immigrants have an average wage income of \$12,000 a year.
3. The typical non-Mexican immigrant has a high school diploma. The typical Mexican immigrant has less than an eighth-grade education.
4. Compared to other Hispanics, only 49 percent of Mexican immigrants are fluent in English, compared to 62 percent of non-Mexican Hispanics.
5. Mexican average incomes are about 75 percent that of other Hispanic immigrants, and Mexican immigrants have about two and a half fewer years of schooling.

Two other facts are worth noting. First, Mexican immigrants live in communities where 15 percent of the residents were also born in Mexico. Non-Mexican immigrants live in communities where fewer than 3 percent of the residents are from their native land. Second, Mexican immigrants account for a much higher proportion of the immigrant population than does any other group—29 percent in the 2000 census.

The last two points are key. **Individuals become assimilated when their incentives to do so are great.** An immigrant from Mexico who moves to East Los Angeles can survive knowing only Spanish and interacting primarily with people from

her or his own community. A Bulgarian immigrant to Billings, Montana, must learn English quickly or return to Bulgaria.

A number of studies suggest that the most important factor in explaining English fluency and other aspects of assimilation is the proportion of individuals in one's community who come from his or her native land. When there are many, assimilation is slow; when there are few, assimilation is rapid.

Mexicans often do poorly because they have been part of a large wave of immigrants who have similar cultures, languages, and backgrounds.

One other factor is that U.S. immigration policy selects immigrants from Mexico primarily on the basis of family connection rather than skill. Immigrants from other countries are more likely to enter and take jobs in highly skilled occupations. In fact, our most able immigrants come from North Africa—Morocco, Algeria, and Libya. Is this because those countries have the world's best educational systems and cultures? No, it is because it is virtually impossible to enter the United States from those countries. The only North Africans to get in are highly educated and talented.

Nothing inherent in Mexicans causes difficulties for them when they come to the United States. Instead, it is our immigration policy that encourages the formation of large, insular Mexican communities. Additionally, our policies do not employ the same selection criteria for Mexicans as they do for applicants from other countries.

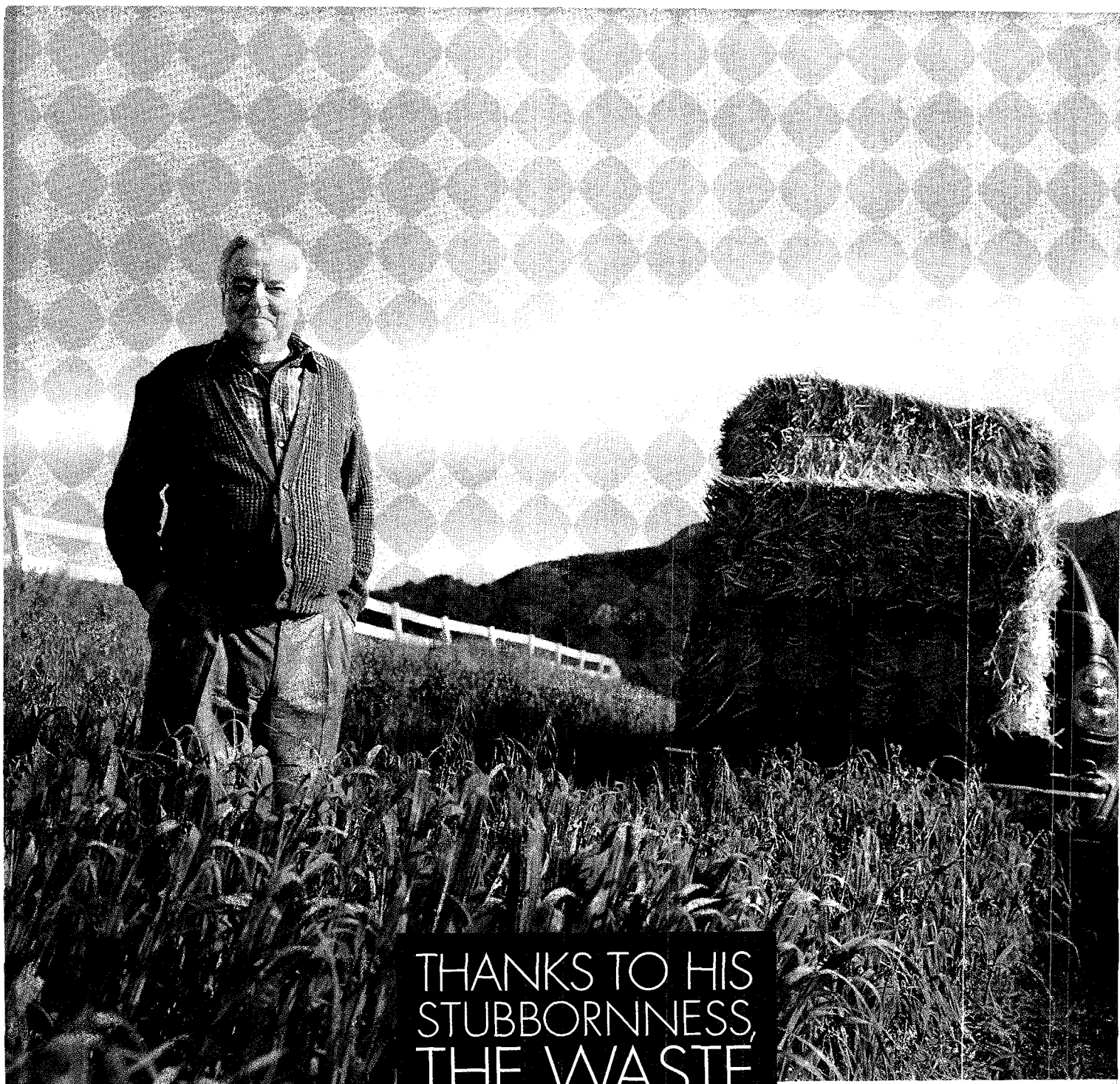
Moving in the direction of skills-based immigration and away from relative-based immigration is one step we can take to ensure that immigrants do well and become integrated when they come to the United States. Moreover, a conscious policy that encourages a more balanced distribution of countries from which we draw immigrants will improve the speed of assimilation and raise the incomes of both immigrants and U.S. natives.

—Edward P. Lazear

Edward P. Lazear is the Morris Arnold Cox Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Jack Steele Parker Professor of Human Resources, Management and Economics at Stanford University's Graduate School of Business.

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